APPENDIX D

Summary of Public Comments and Service Responses on the SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements Environmental Assessment

March 27, 2019

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive
San Diego, CA 91910
Introduction

In December 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, USFWS) published the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements project. The project site is located on the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, Refuge) to the south of State Route (SR) 94 (also referred to as Campo Road) and to the west of Millar Ranch Road in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. The draft EA analyzed the potential effects on the human environment of two alternatives, the proposed action and a no action alternative. The action alternative is identified as the Service-preferred alternative.

The SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements draft EA was made available for public review and comment on December 11, 2018 and comments were accepted through January 10, 2019. We published a Notice of Availability of the draft EA in the San Diego Union Tribune on December 11, 2018, and mailed over 120 notices announcing the availability of the draft EA to surrounding property owners; local, State, and Federal agencies; special districts; tribes; community planning groups, interested organizations; potential user groups; and other interested members of the public.

The draft EA was also sent to the California State Clearinghouse (SCH#2018124001) for distribution to interested state agencies. Printed copies of the draft EA were made available for review at Rancho San Diego Branch Library and the San Diego NWR Complex office. The draft EA was also available for viewing and downloading on the San Diego NWR Refuge website.

Based on the comments received, we made one minor correction of fact to the final EA. The change, which occurs on page 1 of the final EA, is indicated by the strike-out/underline format.

Summary of Comments

During the comment period, we received 18 communications from the general public and one from the County of San Diego (Attachment 1). We also received confirmation on January 11, 2019 from the California State Clearinghouse that we have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements and no comments on the draft EA were received from any state agencies (Attachment 2).

All of the comments received, including letters, emails, and one telephone message, were reviewed and the issues addressed in the comments were evaluated. Many of the comments provided in these communications addressed similar issues. For ease of review, we have grouped similar comments together and organized them by subject heading. The responses to the various comments received are provided below.
Responses to Comments Received by Subject

Comment Topic 1: Traffic Safety

*Have the safety issues at the Millar Ranch Road/SR 94 intersection been considered and evaluated by traffic engineers?*

_The overall project is lacking in its scope of traffic control._

**Response:** The Volpe Center\(^1\) prepared an Access Study in 2014 prior to completion of the design for the parking lot and associated roadway improvements on SR 94 to evaluate current conditions at the intersection of Millar Ranch Road and SR 94. The Access Study analyzed current and projected future traffic volumes, travel speed, and level of service on SR 94 and at the Millar Ranch Road/SR 94 intersection. Sight-distance and current and projected vehicle trips at the Millar Ranch Road/SR 94 intersection were also analyzed. The analysis also calculated vehicle movements at the intersection before and after project development. Corner and stopping sight distance was calculated using a design speed of 65 miles per hour (mph), although the posted speed is 55 mph, and determined that both the corner sight distance and stopping sight distance are greater than Caltrans minimum required sight distance for both pre- and post-project conditions.

Although the project will result in additional vehicles using the intersection, the study indicates that this increase would not affect current safety conditions at the intersection. The proposed parking lot project also includes modifications to the intersection of SR 94 and Millar Ranch Road to improve the ease of ingress and egress at the intersection. These changes include a new westbound left-turn lane from SR 94 onto Millar Ranch Road; lengthening and improving the existing eastbound deceleration right-turn lane from SR 94 onto Millar Ranch Road; and a new eastbound right-turn acceleration lane from Millar Ranch Road onto SR 94. The steep approach grade on Millar Ranch Road at the SR 94 intersection will also be corrected so the profile of Millar Ranch Road will match the elevation of SR 94.

Comment Topic 2: Westbound Left Turns onto SR 94

*Numerous commenters expressed concerns about turning left from Millar Ranch Road onto westbound SR 94, stating that conditions including lack of a traffic signal, speeds on SR 94 that exceed 55 mph, inexperienced drivers from the nearby high school, and limited sight lines have a high potential for accidents. Additionally, visitors using the parking lot would not be aware of these safety issues, resulting in the potential for accidents at the intersection to increase._

The potential for accidents involving school buses and trucks with horse trailers, both of which take more time to enter the travel lanes, was also raised as a concern. The commenters addressed two solutions for improving safety at the intersection: a traffic signal and a center acceleration lane on SR 94 westbound.

Commenters stated that although the eastbound ingress and egress improvements and westbound left turn lane proposed by the project are needed, these improvements do not address the safety issues associated with making a left (westbound) turn onto SR 94. Without a left turn acceleration lane or a traffic light, refuge visitors and residents on Millar Ranch Road will not be provided with a safe opportunity to enter westbound SR 94 from Millar Ranch Road.

Response: The traffic analysis conducted for the project by the Volpe Center and the current project design both considered current traffic conditions along SR 94, as well as the conditions at the intersection of SR 94 and Millar Ranch Road. Following review and consideration of the traffic analysis, the proposed traffic improvements and overall project design, and safety consideration at the intersection, Caltrans determined that the project with the associated proposed traffic improvements would not adversely affect travel on SR 94 or at the intersection. As described in Comment 1, required stopping sight-distances on SR 94 at the Millar Ranch Road intersection were determined to be greater than Caltrans minimum required sight distances.

Caltrans completed a traffic signal warrant study for the SR 94/Millar Ranch Road intersection taking into consideration the proposed project. Based on the results of the study, Caltrans concluded that a traffic signal is not warranted at the intersection.

When investigating the need for a traffic control signal, Caltrans evaluates factors related to the existing operation and safety at the study location and the potential to improve these conditions. The applicable factors, which are described in Chapter 4C (Traffic Control Signal Needs Studies) of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)\(^2\), include eight-hour vehicular volume, four-hour vehicular volume, peak hour, pedestrian volume, school crossing, coordinated signal system, crash experience, roadway network, and an intersection near a grade crossing. The MUTCD states that satisfaction of a traffic signal warrant or warrants shall not in itself require the installation of a traffic control signal. Because SR 94 is a Caltrans facility, Caltrans has jurisdictional authority over traffic facilities affecting SR 94, including decisions related to traffic signal installation. The project design would not however preclude any future actions by Caltrans to install a signal at this location.

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A westbound acceleration lane on SR 94 was also considered but Caltrans determined it would not meet the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design standards due to the lack of available distance needed to accommodate an acceleration rate of 0 to 55 mph. Per AASHTO standards, an acceleration distance of 960 feet is required to accommodate an acceleration rate of 0 to 55 mph. The distance from the intersection west is limited by the existing bridge over the Sweetwater River. Upon review of the roadway geometry by the project team and Caltrans, an acceleration lane cannot be accommodated on the bridge, and the bridge is located 850 feet from the intersection. Therefore, Caltrans Headquarters Liaison and District Design Chief would not approve a design exception for the substandard acceleration lane.

Comment Topic 3: Traffic Safety

Consider a traffic circle at this intersection to allow safe ingress and egress from SR 94. There have been many accidents at this intersection in the past five years; speed should be controlled by reducing the speed limit in this area.

The Millar Ranch Road/SR 94 intersection is very dangerous at night from any direction, but is particularly dangerous when a westbound vehicle is stopped to turn left.

Consider that there have been many accidents (at least nine) in this intersection in the past five years.

The proposed left turn lane from SR 94 on to Millar Ranch Road will be a tremendous benefit.

Response: As addressed in Comment 2, the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Millar Ranch Road and SR 94 does not meet California MUTCD warrants.

Lowering the speed limit on SR 94, which would require a speed survey, and making intersection improvements, such as a traffic circle, would occur at the discretion of Caltrans and would require conformance with the standards described in the California MUTCD. A traffic circle is beyond the scope of this project.

The proposed parking lot will only be open from sunrise to sunset; therefore, visitors will not be making turns at this intersection in the dark. Additionally, a streetlight at the intersection was not deemed necessary to accommodate the project, because it will be closed at night.

As described in the responses to Comments 1 and 2, the project will implement several turning movement improvements to SR 94 to accommodate the additional vehicle trips generated by the project. These improvements have been determined to be adequate to
address the effects of increasing the number of turning movements into and out of the Millar Ranch Road.

**Comment Topic 4: Increased Intersection Wait Times**

*A major problem with this project is the wait time for turning left from Millar Ranch Road onto westbound SR 94. There are times when it takes five to seven minutes to leave Millar Ranch Road onto westbound SR 94. Construction of the parking lot will increase the number of cars turning onto SR 94, thereby increasing the wait time.*

*The number of vehicles waiting to turn left from Millar Ranch Road will increase, significantly increasing the wait time at the intersection.*

*The introduction of buses and horse trailers will drastically impact these wait times. Parents of Steele Canyon High School students may start using the parking lot as a pick up drop off point increasing traffic at the intersection even more.*

*The Millar Ranch Road intersection serves 30 homes in addition to the commercial traffic associated with the communications towers on San Miguel Mountain, and the current proposal is expected to add another 22,000 trips per year.*

**Response:** The project will result in additional vehicles entering and exiting Millar Ranch Road and is likely to increase wait times for turning left (westbound) onto SR 94 periodically during the day, particularly for vehicles waiting to turn left onto SR 94 during peak traffic periods. The total number of trips per hour generated throughout the day due to parking lot use would not however represent a significant traffic impact.

Current and projected am peak hour (7-9 am on weekdays and 7-11 am on weekends) and pm peak hour (4-6 pm on weekdays and 3-7 pm on weekends) vehicle trips at the intersection of Millar Ranch Road and SR-94 were calculated by the Volpe Center. The study assumed that 80 percent of the trips to the Refuge would originate from the west. The study estimated that the increase in vehicles turning left from Millar Ranch Road onto SR 94 would be as follows:

- Two to three vehicles per hour during weekday am peak hours and three to five vehicles per hour during weekday pm peak hours;
- Four to eight vehicles per hour during Saturday am peak hours and four to seven vehicles per hour during Saturday pm peak hours; and
- Two to four vehicles per hour during Sunday am peak hours and six to twelve vehicles per hour during pm peak hours.

Additional vehicles, including school buses and horse trailers, will utilize the intersection to turn left during non-peak hours.
The figure of 22,000 is the estimated total number of people who visit the San Diego NWR annually. This includes not just the Sweetwater River area, but also areas around Mother Miguel Mountain and McGinty Mountain.

Although signage will be posted within the parking lot indicating that use of the lot is intended only for use by refuge visitors, there is the potential for parents of Steele Canyon High School to use the parking lot to pick up students. If this does occur, it would appear more likely that these vehicles would exit to the east due to the known difficulty of making a left turn on SR 94 when school is letting out.

**Comment Topic 5: Pedestrian Crossing**

_The County Department of Parks and Recreation recommends that an at-grade crossing be provided on SR-94 to facilitate equestrian and pedestrian use on both sides of SR 94._

**Response:** The Service would also support an at-grade crossing at the intersection, if and when a signal is installed at Millar Ranch Road to ensure safe crossing. As indicated in Comment 2, we sought approval for the installation of a traffic signal at this intersection, but Caltrans found that required warrants are not met. Without a signalized intersection, an at-grade crossing would not provide safe access to and from the site, and was therefore not included as part of the current proposal.

**Comment Topic 6: Parking Lot Security Issues**

_We want to be sure lighting and security have been considered in the parking lot design._

How will use of the parking lot be controlled? What are the hours of operation? Will the gate be locked and will it be opened and closed in a timely manner?

Will there be night lighting, if no lighting will be provided, will the parking lot be locked?

Why will there only be a gate to close the utility road and not the entire parking lot?

Will there be a sign on SR 94 for the parking lot?

**Response:** Access to the SDG&E easement (utility road) will be secured by a locked gate at all times. Access to the parking lot will be controlled by a solar powered automatic locking gate that will open at sunrise and close at sunset. If the gate closes before someone leaves, it will open to allow the vehicle to exit the lot. No one is permitted in the parking lot after dark, and no lighting will be provided. The lack of lighting is intended to minimize impacts to wildlife and reduce the potential for users to linger in the parking lot after dark. Parking lot and trail hours (open sunset to sunrise) will be clearly posted within the parking lot and at the trailhead along with general use regulations. Signage will also state that the parking lot is
provided for Refuge visitors only. Refuge law enforcement will patrol the lot and may issue citations to vehicles that are parked after hours.

A directional sign on SR 94 indicating the location of the parking lot is not currently part of the project, and would likely require approval from Caltrans. We can work with Caltrans to initiate the process for obtaining signage for the parking lot along SR 94 as we move forward with Caltrans on the final design of the highway improvements associated with the project.

Comment Topic 7: Illegal Parking on Millar Ranch Road

There is a potential for the increased occurrence of illegal parking on Millar Ranch Road due to this project.

Will the Refuge enforce the “no parking” rule on Millar Ranch Road?

This project will reduce the potential for illegal parking on Millar Ranch Road, and help with the current scenario of Refuge visitors parking along the shoulder of Millar Ranch Road.

The proposal will eliminate current ad hoc parking arrangements that make access difficult and disrupt travel on Millar Ranch Road.

Response: The proposed project will accommodate much needed parking in proximity to existing trailheads on the Refuge, which is intended to avoid the presence of illegally parked cars on Millar Ranch Road. Parking on Millar Ranch Road will only be permitted at a paved pull out about 0.3 miles from SR 94; this area will accommodate only two vehicles. Existing no parking signage will be supplemented with additional no parking signage where necessary along other Refuge portions of the roadway and monitoring and enforcement will be implemented.

Comment Topic 8: Increase in Bicycle Use on Millar Ranch Road

The project will increase bike riders coming up/down Millar Ranch Road.

Will a bike or jogger lane on Millar Ranch Road be included?

Response: The parking lot is being provided to accommodate visitors to the Refuge who wish to access our designated trail system. We do not anticipate increased bicycle use on Millar Ranch Road as a result of this project. Signage will indicate that use of the parking lot is limited to Refuge visitors. A bike or jogger lane will not be provided on Millar Ranch Road as part of this project.
Comment Topic 9: Potential for Increased Dumping of Trash

We already have a dumping problem on Millar Ranch Road; I think this project will increase the problem.

Will the parking lot have trash bins, and if so, will they be emptied on a regular basis?

Response: We do not agree that the construction of the parking lot will result in increased dumping on Millar Ranch Road. No changes will be made that would increase the potential for dumping. In addition, there will be no access to the parking lot from sunset to sunrise and the access gate to the utility road will be locked at all times.

One or two trashcans, designed to avoid attracting birds and other wildlife, will be provided within the parking lot and will be emptied on a regular basis.

Comment Topic 10: Community Concerns

Please keep the residents along Millar Ranch Road in mind in developing and maintaining this project.

Response: The Refuge will continue to keep the residents of Millar Ranch Road informed about the project, including construction schedules and any issues that may arise after the parking lot is constructed. We will monitor activities occurring within the parking lot and in the surrounding area to ensure that visitors are staying on the designated trail and only using the parking lot for its intended purpose. We would also appreciate hearing from the residents when there are concerns or issues that require our attention.

Comment Topic 11: Cultural Resource Protection and Monitoring

An archaeological records search and survey should be completed prior to ground disturbance.

Response: Both a record search and pedestrian survey were conducted for the project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE) and tribal consultation was completed (see page 23 of the final EA).

Archaeological and Native American monitors should be present when ground disturbance occurs and should have the authority to halt further action in the area in question. If any sites are found that could be impacted by the project, mitigation measures will be necessary.

Response: Due to the lack of adequate ground visibility and the known archaeological sensitivity of the general area, the draft EA states that a qualified archaeologist and a Kumeyaay cultural monitor will be present during excavation to ensure no adverse effects to
cultural resources occur (EC-2 in Appendix C of the draft EA). The draft EA also states that “In the event of an inadvertent discovery, archeological remains or specimens will not be removed or damaged, and all appropriate actions as required by current state and federal regulations will be implemented” (SC-5 in Appendix C of the draft EA).

The project area has a rich history for the Kumeyaay people. The Campo Band of Mission Indians request to have Kumeyaay cultural monitors from the Campo be present for all future surveys and ground disturbing activities, to ensure Kumeyaay cultural resources are not overlooked.

Who does the monitoring if more than one tribe would like to participate in monitoring? On past projects, a system of rotation was worked out between tribes that want to participate in the monitoring process.

Response: The draft EA included a conservation measure requiring that a qualified archaeologist and a Kumeyaay cultural monitor be present on the site during all ground-disturbing activities. We are not aware of any established protocols for a system of rotation between tribes, but any tribe interested in being present to monitor the excavation process is welcome and can make a request to be on the site during site disturbance.

Comment Topic 12: Flood Control

The project appears to propose activities within or in close proximity to the County and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-mapped flood areas of the Sweetwater River. Any proposed grading or development within a County and/or FEMA-mapped floodway or floodplain requires close coordination and review by the County Flood Control District, and the project must ensure compliance with all requirements of the County’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (FDPO) and FEMA Regulations.

If the project proposes any alterations of the floodway or floodplain (e.g., changes to the water surface elevation or lines of inundation), this would require a County permit and a Conditional/Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR/LOMR) in accordance with FEMA Regulations and County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance Section 811.503(b). Any proposed work within mapped floodways requires a "no-rise" certification with supporting analysis with the County's FDPO Section 811.506.

Response: As noted in the draft EA, a portion of the project does occur within the FEMA floodway and 100-year and 500-year floodplains. All activities within the floodplain are located on federal land, which is outside the jurisdiction of the County of San Diego. Therefore, the FDPO does not apply to the federal project. However, the project would comply with federal regulations. Specifically, the project has been designed in accordance with FHWA Policy 23 CFR 650A and Executive Order 11988. Work within the floodway,
which occurs at the southern end of Millar Ranch Road in the project area, is limited to resurfacing and would match the existing surface elevation. Therefore, no rise would occur within the regulatory floodway. The only location with a net gain of fill is within the 100-year floodplain required for culvert installation underneath the parking area access road. This has been designed to minimize fill and impacts to the floodplain, and would not raise the base flood elevation more than one foot. For these reasons, a CLOMR/LOMR is not required.

**Comment Topic 13: Watershed Protection**

*Since the project is located in close proximity to both Steele Canyon Creek and Sweetwater River, and within an environmentally sensitive area, we suggest that the project incorporate stormwater design strategies outlined in the County of San Diego's Best Management Practice Design Manual.*

**Response:** Best Management Practices for stormwater management will be incorporated in compliance with the Standard Specifications for Construction of Roads and Bridges on Federal Highway Projects (FP-14). These measures, and design measures incorporated into the project, are consistent with a number of measures suggested in the County of San Diego's Best Management Practice Design Manual. The addition of impervious surface is primarily due to adding acceleration/deceleration lanes to improve public safety. The following measures have been incorporated into the project design to minimize water quality impacts:

1. An aggregate surface is proposed for the parking area, rather than pavement, to maintain more pervious surface area.

2. Existing drainage patterns will be maintained to the Sweetwater River, while minor modifications to the existing drainage patterns to Steele Canyon Creek will occur. The parking area would intercept existing sheetflow from SR 94 that would then enter Steele Canyon Creek. To capture this stormwater, vegetated swales (referred to as drainage ditches in the draft EA) have been incorporated around the parking area. This would capture and slow stormwater runoff and would continue to release the stormwater as sheetflow prior to entering Steele Canyon Creek.

3. The riparian habitat along Steele Canyon Creek and Sweetwater River will be avoided, which will provide a natural vegetated buffer between the parking area runoff and the waterbodies. The site design maintains a 100-foot buffer adjacent to the riparian area in most instances. The exception to this is the parking lot access road, which was constrained by existing utility lines.
4. Areas temporarily disturbed by construction will be revegetated, using a Refuge Manager approved native plant species mix, by installing plugs and/or spreading seeds.

Comment Topic 14: Gravity Sewer Line in SR 94

Based on the figure provided in the Notice of Availability, it appears there is potential impact to the District's gravity sewer line. The project scope is adjacent to the District sewer line. The project applicant will need to conduct an analysis of the potential impacts to the District sewerage infrastructure and easements. This analysis must be submitted to the District for review and approval.

An analysis of potential impacts to an existing gravity sewer line located within the SR 94 right-of-way must be conducted and submitted to the District for review and approval.

Response: The design team assessed existing utilities using as-builts provided by Caltrans. The gravity sewer line has been identified as located in the hillside on the north side of SR 94. The sewer line is outside the areas proposed for improvements and would not be impacted by the project. A plan sheet, reflecting the sewer line and construction limits, will be submitted to the District for review.

Comment Topic 15: Clarification of Project Site Ownership

According to the draft EA, this parcel is currently owned by Caltrans, and a transfer to the Refuge is “in process.” This is obviously out of date.

Response: This statement is actually included in the Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation Form prepared in 2017, and is provided as Attachment A of the draft EA. The statement was accurate when that document are prepared. However, to avoid confusion, the final EA has been revised in Section 1.2 Project Location (Page 1) to include the following information about the ownership of the project site:

“The project site is included within an approximately 18.8-acre parcel that was transferred to the San Diego NWR by Caltrans on February 13, 2018. This parcel was part of a larger transfer of land from Caltrans to the Refuge that included several areas set aside for mitigation and some, including the current project site, which were declared excess right of way.”

How does current ownership of the site affect maintenance requirements of the lower section of Millar Ranch Road? Will transfer of ownership to the Refuge eliminate the requirement for residents to maintain the road?
Response: With the transfer of this land to the Refuge, the Refuge is now responsible for the maintenance of Millar Ranch Road from the southern edge of the SR 94 right-of-way to the portion maintained by County of San Diego Permanent Road Division. According to the County’s website (https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/dpw/COUNTY_ROADS/roadpdf/prd_roadregister.pdf): “A Permanent Road Division Zone (PRD Zone) is a district which provides property owners a mechanism to pay for private road maintenance in a geographically defined area. The County of San Diego’s Permanent Road Division Zone program provides maintenance services to 68 PRD Zones that have approximately 94 private road centerline miles throughout the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Road maintenance services are paid by the property owners through special benefit assessments/taxes that are placed on the tax rolls, which are voted on by the landowners themselves. The boundaries of the PRD Zone generally include properties fronting on or using the road(s). Road maintenance services are provided by the Department of Public Works through contractors. Maintenance of roads provides property owners with a safe and secure way to access their homes and to travel to and from the community. In addition, regular maintenance of the roads helps keep the overall repair costs down and protects the residents’ investment in their roads.”

Millar Ranch Road is described as P6109-PRD MILLAR RANCH RD PRD 1012 with a length of 0.48 miles. The approximate location of the PRD is from where the power lines cross over Millar Ranch Road to the intersection with Millar Anita Drive (see map at https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/dpw/COUNTY_ROADS/Roads%20PRD%20Reports/MILLAR%20RANCH%20ROAD%201012.pdf).

Comment Topic 16: Increased Visitation on the Refuge

I have no concerns with the increase in visitors to the Refuge that will result from this project: public access to public lands is good!

Response: Comment noted.

Comment Topic 17: Support for the Proposal

The County’s Department of Parks and Recreation supports improved trail connectivity and trail staging access to the regional trail and nearby existing and planned community trails.

I support the new staging area.

This is sorely needed.

The proposed parking area will serve people better than the existing parking at Singer Lane.

Response: Comment noted.
Attachment 1: Written Comments Received During the Public Comment Period

Attachment 1

Written Comments Received During the Public Comment Period
Good Morning, Ms. Terp,

Attached is the County of San Diego's comment letter on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's project regarding the SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements Draft EA (a.k.a. Parking Lot EA).

Please review the letter, and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sharon Ippolito, Administrative Analyst III
Inter-Jurisdictional Notice Coordinator
Planning & Development Services
County of San Diego Land Use & Environment Group
O: (858) 495-5450

2 attachments

2019-01-10 - COSD comment letter - SR 94-Millar Ranch Road.pdf
68K

Attachment A.pdf
775K
January 10, 2019

Jill Terp
Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
San Diego NWR Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Dr.
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Via e-mail to: Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE SR 94/MILLAR RANCH ROAD INTERSECTION AND PARKING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, SAN DIEGO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Dear Ms. Terp,

The County of San Diego (County) reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge’s (NWR) SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements (Project), dated December 19, 2018.

The County appreciates the opportunity to review the Project and offers the following comments for your consideration. Please note that none of these comments should be construed as County support for this Project.

FLOOD CONTROL

1. The project appears to propose activities within or in close proximity to the County and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-mapped flood areas of the Sweetwater River. Any proposed grading or development within a County and/or FEMA-mapped floodway or floodplain requires close coordination and review by the County Flood Control District, and the project must ensure compliance with all requirements of the County’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (FDPO) and FEMA Regulations.

2. If the project proposes any alterations of the floodway or floodplain (e.g., changes to the water surface elevation or lines of inundation), this would require a County permit and a Conditional/Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR/LOMR) in accordance with FEMA Regulations and County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance Section 811.503(b). Any proposed work within mapped floodways requires a “no-rise” certification with supporting analysis with the County’s FDPO Section 811.506.
WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

1. Since the project is located in close proximity to both Steele Canyon Creek and Sweetwater River, and within an environmentally sensitive area, we suggest that the project incorporate storm water design strategies outlined in the County of San Diego's Best Management Practice Design Manual. This manual can be viewed at the following link:
   https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/DevelopmentandConstruction.html

PARKS AND RECREATION

1. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) supports improved trail connectivity and trail staging access to the regional Sweetwater River and Loop Trail as well as to nearby existing and planned community trails.

2. DPR recommends the project to include an at-grade crossing over SR-94 to facilitate equestrian and pedestrian use on both sides of SR-94.

WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

1. Based on the figure provided in the Notice of Availability, it appears there is potential impact to the District's gravity sewer line. The project scope is adjacent to the District sewer line (see attachment). The project applicant will need to conduct an analysis of the potential impacts to the District sewerage infrastructure and easements. This analysis must be submitted to the District for review and approval.

The County appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Project. We look forward to receiving future documents related to this Project and providing additional assistance, at your request. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Timothy Vertino, Land Use / Environmental Planner, at (858) 495-5468, or via e-mail at timothy.vertino@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Eric Lardy, AICP
Chief (Acting), Advance Planning Division
Planning & Development Services

Enclosure: Attachment A – Exhibit showing the approximate location of the District gravity sewer line

E-mail cc: Adam Wilson, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 2
Robert Spanbauer, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 2
Mel Millstein, Group Program Manager, LUEG
Sheri McPherson, Project Manager, Public Works, DPW
Christopher Lawrance, Land Use / Environmental Planner, DPW
Jeff Kashak, Land Use / Environmental Planner, DPW
Kimberly Jones, Land Use / Environmental Planner, DPW
Carolina Delgado, Engineering Technician, DPW
Deborah Mosley, Chief Department Operations, DPR
Emmet Aquino, Park Project Manager, DPR
Sharon Ippolito, Administrative Analyst, PDS
Here is Campo Band of Mission Indians letter regarding the Parking Lot EA. There were some other issues not addressed in our letter. One being who does the monitoring if more than one tribe would like to participate. On past projects we have worked out a system of rotation between the tribes that wanted to participate in the monitoring.

Marcus Cuero
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SR 94 Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvement.pdf
203K
December 18, 2018

Jill Terp

Refuge Manager

San Diego National Wildlife Refuge

1080 Gunpowder Point Drive

Chula Vista, CA 91910

Dear Ms. Terp

Subject: SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvement

After review of TCNS #18073, Campo Band of Mission Indians concludes these areas have a rich history for the Kumeyaay people. There were many villages throughout the Kumeyaay territory. Much of that history was lost when the Kumeyaay people were relocated to other areas. Campo Band of Mission Indians requests to have Kumeyaay cultural monitors from Campo be present for all future surveys and ground disturbing activities, to ensure Kumeyaay cultural resource are not overlooked. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Marcus Cuero at mariscuero@campo-nsn.gov or by phone (619) 478-9046.

Sincerely,

Ralph Goff

Chairman

Campo Band of Mission Indians
Jim Royle <jwroyle@cts.com>
Reply-To: Jim Royle <jwroyle@cts.com>
To: Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov

Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 1:51 PM

Attached is the SDCAS comment letter on the SR94/Millar Ranch Road Parking Lot project.

Regards,
Jim Royle

SR94-Millar Ranch Road Parking Lot DEA.pdf
329K
To: Ms. Jill Terp, Refuge Manager  
San Diego NWR Complex  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive  
Chula Vista, California 91910

Subject: Draft Environmental Assessment  
State Route 94/Millar Ranch Road Parking Lot Project

Dear Ms. Terp:

I am responding to the Notice of Availability for the subject project on behalf of this committee of the San Diego County Archaeological Society.

Particularly given the proposed parking lot's rather close proximity to the Sweetwater River, an archaeological records search and survey should be completed (if they haven't been already) prior to any ground disturbances. If any sites are found to be in the areas which will be impacted by the project, including staging areas, mitigation measures will be necessary, as recommended by the project archaeologist.

In any case, when actual ground disturbances occur in previously-undisturbed areas, there should be archaeological and Native American monitors present, with the authority to halt further actions in the area in question.

SDCAS appreciates the opportunity to offer these comments on this project.

Sincerely,

James W. Royle, Jr., Chairman  
Environmental Review Committee

cc: SDCAS President  
File
To: Jill Terp  
Refuge Manager  
USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex  
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista C 91910

From: Butch and Mary Alice Kessler  
Spring Valley, CA 91978

Subject: Comments on Draft EA for SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements (hereafter referred as the Project)

Comments:

We agree with the purpose and overall scope of the Project. The current public ad hoc parking arrangements are inadequate, pose difficulties for users of the NWR to ingress and egress, and can be disruptive to traffic. We believe the Project is a common sense solution to the problem.

However, we firmly believe that a traffic light is a must and adequate intersection lighting at the intersection of Millar Ranch Rd/SR 94 be added in the Project for the following reasons:

a. Every day, there are several periods of heavy traffic: the morning and evening rush hours, the morning and afternoon high traffic periods from Steele Canyon High School, along with special High School and Casino events, etc.

b. Due to the large amount of high-speed traffic approaching the intersection from both directions on SR-94 at any time of the day, it is already very difficult and dangerous for a driver to negotiate. At night, it is very dangerous from any direction but, particularly when a westbound vehicle is stopped, waiting for a gap in the cross traffic to turn left onto Millar Ranch Road. This is already a high-risk situation and will only get worse with the substantial increase of vehicles using the new parking lot.

c. Vehicles entering SR 94 from Millar Ranch Rd are faced with almost continuous high-speed traffic from both directions. We have to wait for a narrow window to open to safely cross the road to go West or to even turn Eastbound. We stress: this is high-speed traffic and there is no incentive for them to slow down and they come upon the intersection with little warning.

d. The Project’s improvements of SR-94, including the westbound turn-lane and eastbound right-turn acceleration lane are absolutely needed. However, that will not solve the basic problem of the high speed traffic from both directions. Eastbound approaching vehicles accelerating around the curve have almost no time to size-up and react to a dangerous vehicle maneuver in that intersection. The same goes for Westbound, high-speed vehicles: they cannot even see the intersection before they are suddenly upon it.

e. The scenario of an Westbound car stopped in the left turn lane, at night, sandwiched by high speed vehicles whizzing by on both sides, waiting for a gap in the traffic to be able to turn left, hoping not to be rear-ended by an inattentive driver on their cellphone, is real! It is already happening every day; it will only get much worse with the increased Millar Ranch Rd traffic when this project is concluded. And, please keep in mind, a great many of those high-speed vehicles on SR 94 are high
school students with not a great deal of experience. Steele Canyon High has already had several tragic traffic accidents in this area; let's try to avoid another.

For the above reasons, we respectfully submit this request to a traffic light to be included in the plans.

Butch and Mary Alice Kessler
Comments:

We agree with the purpose and overall scope of the Project. The current public ad hoc parking arrangements are inadequate, pose difficulties for users of the NWR to ingress and egress, and can be disruptive to traffic. We believe the Project is a common sense solution to the problem.

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Please notice there has been many accidents in this interception in the past five 5 years I believe 9 Accident last we checked in the city report.

Speed should be control by reducing the speed limit.
Hi Everyone,

We live on Wache Drive and wanted to provide feedback in regards to the new visitor parking area on Millar Ranch Road. In addition to the proposed road improvements, it is a necessity to make it easier to turn left from Millar Ranch Road onto the 94-West. Traffic is heavy on the 94 all day due to the school and the casino. Turning left is already extremely hard as is in a regular car. The new visitor parking area is not only adding a lot of traffic, it is also going to bring busses and trucks with horse trailers that will also need to turn left on the 94. This is going to lead to accidents due to people trying to make it out quickly in heavy traffic.

We would suggest either adding a center lane (something to pull into so that you can merge safely into traffic) or a street light.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

All the best,

Insa & Rick

Insa Prochnow-Sturm
Rick Sturm
91978 Spring Valley, CA
[EXTERNAL] Parking Lot EA

1 message

Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 9:11 PM

Aaron Burruss, Spring Valley CA 91978

To: Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov
Cc: Jill Terp <jill_terp@fws.gov>

From:
Aaron Burruss

Comments on Draft EA for SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to provide my comments and concerns for this project.

There are many aspects of this project that I am very excited for. Primarily, this project will help with the current scenario of Refuge visitors that park along the shoulder of Millar Ranch Road. While many areas along Millar Ranch Road are posted as “No Parking”, many Refuge visitors park along the road shoulder anyway. This parking causes potentially dangerous situations for other vehicles traversing Millar Ranch Road. Many times these visitors do not park completely off the roadway. This will also help alleviate pedestrian traffic on Millar Ranch Road, which is very narrow, has blind turns, and has no sidewalks. Having this visitor parking lot will be a TREMENDOUS benefit in this regard.

I believe that this parking and visitor area will also bring an increased amount of visitors to the Refuge as well. This is a good thing for the Refuge, and as a resident, I have no concern with this; public access to public lands is good!

I do, however have a concern with how the traffic ingress and egress is proposed to be handled in this EA. For ingress to Millar Ranch Road, the proposed improvement to the turn lane on east-bound CA-94 is great. The proposed turn lane from west-bound CA-94 to Millar Ranch is ABSOLUTELY needed, even today, with the current levels of traffic. It's a wonder that there have not been accidents, to-date, for west-bound traffic turning onto Millar Ranch Road. Every time I travel west-bound from Jamul to turn onto Millar Ranch, I turn on my signal about 1/2 mile early, and I constantly watch my mirrors. Without fail, people are slamming on brakes and swerving to the shoulder to avoid my stopped vehicle in the middle of the roadway. A completely stopped vehicle in the middle of a 55MPH state highway is a CRAZY scenario. It is EXTREMELY dangerous in the current road configuration, so this turn-lane addition will be a tremendous benefit.

As for egress, the acceleration lane from Millar Ranch to east-bound CA-94 will be a benefit as well.

The major problem with this project is the egress from Millar Ranch onto west-bound CA-94. In the current configuration, traffic exiting Millar Ranch Road onto west-bound CA-94 sometimes have to wait for many many minutes to get an opening in traffic that big enough to rush into. When the east-bound traffic subsides, the west-bound traffic is heavy; when the west-bound traffic is lessened, the east-bound traffic picks up. This leads to people making poor decisions in their driving, and taking chances with their acceleration that they should not take. I have a large motorhome and trailer. With this slowly-accelerating vehicle, there are times that it will take me between 5-7 minutes to leave Millar Ranch Road onto west-bound CA-94. The introduction of busses and horse trailers (as described in the Draft EA) into the egress traffic from Millar Ranch will drastically impact the traffic leaving Millar Ranch Road. If there are two busses trying to leave at the same time, or a bus and a vehicle with a trailer, there could be a 10 minute delay in all traffic simply attempting to leave Millar Ranch, as they would be waiting behind these vehicles with trailers.

At an ABSOLUTE minimum, there should be a center lane for acceleration onto west-bound CA-94. In the Draft EA, the center lane is diagonally striped, which is indicative of an area that should not be driven though, and therefore not acceptable for acceleration. Adding an actual lane here will be the bare minimum needed to support safe and adequate egress from Millar Ranch Road. It should be noted that between Singer Lane and Proctor Valley Road, almost EVERY street (public or private), driveways, or neighborhoods have such a center acceleration/turn lane. I believe that Vista Sage and Vista Diego are the two exceptions. There are MULTIPLE neighborhoods which have extremely limited number of homes (ie: Hillestad ~9 homes, Stoney Oak ~4 homes, dirt road past Hillestad ~6 homes), as well as many PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS that all have such turn/acceleration lanes in place. How can it be that a neighborhood (Millar Ranch) with 30 homes, a tremendous amount of commercial traffic (utilities and radio tower employees and maintenance), and an existing presence by FWS can exist even today without such adequate acceleration lanes for egress onto the public
highway? Now on top of that, there is a proposal to add 22,000 vehicles per year onto this road. The egress to west-bound CA-94 can not support the traffic today.

While a west-bound turn/acceleration lane would be extremely beneficial for standard automotive traffic (cars, trucks, motorcycles), Large busses, horse trailers, motorhomes, etc. will likely not be able to turn into a west-bound acceleration lane, due to the size of the vehicle and the wide radius needed to make the left turn off of Millar Ranch. Also, due to the proximity to the curve in the road (adjacent to the old bridge), there is limited visibility for those vehicles egressing Millar Ranch. East-bound traffic is also frequently traveling at a very high rate of speed (often DRASTICALLY above the posted speed limit of 55MPH). This curve and high speed traffic makes even a center turn/acceleration lane less than ideal.

Therefore, I believe that the most appropriate solution for this project is a traffic signal. Controlling the flow of traffic and the safety of the public should be the utmost priority for this project — as per the established goal of the Refuge — “...to "provide safe and high-quality opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses that foster public appreciation of the unique natural heritage of the San Diego region". NO turn/acceleration lane, and NO traffic light (as proposed in this EA) does NOT provide a safe opportunity for the refuge visitors or for the residents of this neighborhood. The installation of a traffic signal here would be the absolute best scenario for the public, and for the ability of the Refuge to meet their self-described goals.

Another concern I have is the ownership and maintenance responsibility of the northern-most section of Millar Ranch Road. This section of land, and the existing Millar Ranch Road ingress/egress, is located on a parcel of land owned by Caltrans. However Caltrans has never taken ANY responsibility for any maintenance of the ingress/egress easement of Millar Ranch Road. Historically, this section of Millar Ranch road has been maintained SOLELY by the residents on Millar Ranch Road. This maintenance responsibility is based on language in an easement document from 1970, and signed by all parcel owners on Millar Ranch Road (but NOT by anyone in FWS). In fact, on March 31, 2017, the residents of Millar Ranch Road collected over $12,000 from the neighbors on Millar Ranch road, and paid for the paving of 300’ of Millar Ranch Road.

According to the EA, this parcel is still currently owned by Caltrans, and a transfer to the Refuge of ownership is “in process”, and “anticipated in the Spring of 2017” (Page 1, Part 1: Project Overview, Paragraph 2). Obviously, the language in this paragraph is very out-dated, so I have no idea of the current status of this transfer. Regardless, there is a legal easement document, which appears on my title report, that shows that I have an easement on this section of land. This is fine. There is also a responsibility — if for no other reason than because of a LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY of any other party — for the residents of Millar Ranch Road to maintain this section of pavement.

On Page 6, Part 2.2: Action Alternative, Paragraph 6, it states: “Millar Ranch Road was recently paved but the asphalt surface is poor quality. As part of the project improvements, Millar Ranch Road would be repaved within the area shown on Figure 2-1 to match the current surface elevation”. Based on my measurements of Millar Ranch, I BELIEVE that this 300’ encompasses the entire amount of road that was paved by the residents in 2017, even though the project scope only uses about 150’ of this roadway. I think this is a great gesture in this EA, and will be beneficial for all travelers on Millar Ranch. However this still leaves a concern about future maintenance requirements and responsibility. I believe it should be part of the scope of the transfer of this parcel from Caltrans — and the subsequent repaving as part of this project — that the Refuge/FWS takes on formal and legal maintenance requirements of this section of Millar Ranch. This would also create a contiguous section of maintenance responsibility for FWS, as the immediately adjacent 0.7 miles of roadway already fall under the maintenance purview of FWS. This also will eliminate the completely ridiculous requirement for the residents on Millar Ranch to be forced to maintain a roadway for a PUBLIC road (PRD 1012). There should never be a scenario that a public roadway is only accessible via a privately maintained easement. The Refuge taking legal maintenance responsibility solves this.

To recap, this project has the potential to be a hugely successful and beneficial public good. However the EA is lacking in its details of ownership and maintenance responsibility of the newly paved section of Millar Ranch Road. The overall project is also lacking in its scope of traffic control.

There WILL be a serious accident caused by a vehicle traveling on CA-94 colliding with a vehicle leaving Millar Ranch Road onto west-bound CA-94. All accidents are bad, but this could be a school bus full of kids on a field trip leaving the Refuge. Such an accident is absolutely preventable by the installation of a traffic light at this intersection.

A wise friend once told me a saying that applies in this situation: “If it’s predictable, it’s preventable”. PLEASE modify this plan to PREVENT an absolutely PREDICTABLE event from occurring. PLEASE modify this plan to be a good neighbor and alleviate traffic delays due to increased refuge traffic that does not have adequate egress ability.

Thank you for your time.

-Aaron
[EXTERNAL] Parking Lot EA

1 message

John Canton
To: Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov
Cc: Neighbor Millar Aaron Burrus

Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 2:53 PM

To:
Jill Terp
Refuge Manager
USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista C 91910

From:
John and Sarah Canton
Spring Valley, CA 91978

Subject: Comments on Draft EA for SR 94/Millard Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements (hereafter referred as the Project)

Comments:

We agree with the purpose and overall scope of the Project. The current public ad hoc parking arrangements are inadequate, pose difficulties for users of the NWR to ingress and egress, and can be disruptive to traffic. We believe the Project is a common sense solution to the problem.

However, we firmly believe that a traffic light and adequate intersection lighting at the intersection of Millard Ranch Rd/SR 94 be added in the Project for the following reasons:

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For the above reasons, we respectfully submit this request.

https://mail.google.com/mail/b/AN5oxK26oEiYiGvGk_bopOL_3n8MJdy-l1vn5j_MPJZzbtm87t1w/u/0?ik=7fa18f0b35&view=pt&search=all&permthd=…
To whom it may concern

As an East County resident since 1982 I have been hiking and biking in the “steel bridge” area in Rancho San Diego for the last 20 years – I currently bike in the area 1-3 times every week. As the amount of open space available in the region for hiking and biking (and in general) has decreased, the popularity of the Steel Bridge has increased. It is not uncommon to see the current space for parking full – especially on weekends – resulting in people parking in random and creative ways. In addition, the existing parking space is quite tight which makes it difficult to pull in and out of some of the spaces. As a resident and user of the National Wildlife Refuge, I strongly support, and ask for your commitment to the development of the parking area.

Another issue with the existing lot is the high speed cross traffic when pulling out of Singer Lane. It seems it would be appropriate to have a traffic light at the 94 & Millar Ranch Road intersection to accommodate visitors to the refuge as well as the residents of the Millar Ranch Rd area.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Osterling
Main concern for the new parking lot at the bottom of Millar Ranch Road, would be the intersection with Highway 94 and making a left turn. It’s already challenging for long time residents of MRR, and not only will it take longer to do so with an increased queue, novice area drivers are certain to have issues and potentially cause an accident. Has the intersection been studied to take on this extra volume of cars? I would also assume parents at Steele Canyon might start using this as a pick up and drop off point; increasing traffic volume even more.
To whom it may concern,

I am a resident at the top of Millar Ranch road. Recently I’ve been told about all the plans to put in a parking lot at the bottom of Millar Ranch Road. I think this is a great idea and will limit the amount of people parking illegally on the side of the road. Reading over the plans I only have one concern. Making a left turn from Millar Ranch road onto the 94 north is very difficult currently. I’m concerned that this parking lot will cause more traffic pulling out which will cause quite a few problems. I see longer wait times pulling out due to trailers waiting for an opening and a higher amount of traffic. I already have times where I’m waiting 5 minutes. I see a huge potential for accidents due to people trying to squeeze in or trailers not calculating correctly.

Something has to be done about this. If a traffic light isn’t possible then at least a center acceleration lane needs to be put in. This will allow people pulling out to get across one lane and wait for the other lane to clear. Or a traffic circle would work here.

I strongly advise doing something about this. I see huge problems later if it’s not taken care of now.

Leana Burruss-Swiggers
Attention: Jill Terp, Refuge Manager

This email concerns the proposed Visitor Parking Lot on Millar Ranch Road.

Trying to turn left off of Millar Ranch Road onto Hwy 94, is problematic now. With the increased parking lot traffic also wanting to turn left, the wait time will be significant. A left turn acceleration lane on Hwy 94 needs to be provided or a traffic light. People drive very fast on Hwy 94 – trying to ease our way off of Millar Ranch and heading west onto Hwy 94 can be risky. Drivers on Hwy 94 do not slow down even if they see you trying to make it across the east bound lane onto the west bound lane.

I also think litter on Millar Ranch Road will increase. Is the Refuge going to provide trash service/bins in the parking lot? Will the bins be emptied on a regular basis? We already have a problem with illegal dumping.

I am also concerned about an increase in bike riders coming up/down Millar Ranch Road. People already park on the side of Millar Ranch Road even though signs are posted saying “No Parking”. There is no shoulder on Millar Ranch Road so an increase in bike riders, joggers, and illegal parking on Millar Ranch Road will be a problem. How is the Refuge planning on addressing this issue? Will you enforce the “no parking” rule? Will you put in a bike or jogger lane?

Thank you for allowing us to express our concerns.

Jill Johnson

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
My family and I (Girard’s) have been part of the community on the hill for 30 plus years.
I think it’s great to have a parking place for visitors to come and appreciate the wild life reserve.
Pros and cons
My step mother 20 years ago was involved in a serious car crash right at that intersection. Two of my neighbors as well.
I’m sure your very aware of how serious and possibly fatal that area is. One crucial and very pivotal standpoint to keep in mind not only for your project and visitors but the residents that will be dealing with this on a daily basis.
STOP LIGHT
Will a resident, visitor, or someone passing by in that location that can very well be involved in a fatality due the magnitude of how dangerous that intersection is to get the wake up call of how dangerous it is in that area. Have u brought engineers and inspectors to evaluate this very concerning underlying issue.
My father and I and mr Wache w a few other residents on the hill used to maintain that road (Millar Ranch road) for years!! Which in that respect are very thankful for the wild life reserve paving the road. It’s been a blessing I assure you.
But the traffic that I sued this has been another ongoing issue I assure you. As the trash that gets thrown out by the piles. Which you pick up very respectfully fast and prompt thank you.
But what will happen now? Will there be a curfew on when and where they can go and come. Will there be a locked gate or chain. Open and closed. On a timely manner.
If your putting $ into this project. Which once again I think is great. Please keep the residents in mind as well.
And of course the tax paying residents.
Many issues here
Safety first
Sincerely the Girard family
Any questions or concerns please call me at

Thanks again
Eric

Sent from my iPhone
[EXTERNAL] Parking Lot EA
1 message

Jodi Visosky
To: "Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov" <Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov> Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 6:02 PM

Hello,
We are neighbors of the NWR at Millar Ranch Road and are mainly focused on the left hand turn onto SR-94. We don't believe you have adequately addressed this. Currently it is very difficult, and at times dangerous, time consuming and frustrating. The speed limit on SR-94 and the amount cars traveling past this new parking lot is going to be a real problem for the visitors of the NWR who park in this new lot and need to turn left. We fear for accidents and the potential for people getting hurt. This has already happened.

Also...we want to make sure you have considered lighting and security in this parking lot. The sketches did not show whether or not there would be lighting.

Thanks, Jodi and John Visosky

Sent from my iPad
To Whom It Concerns and Jill,

We are fairly new residents to Millar Ranch Rd, but we do have some concerns about parking lot project. We do feel that present parking is deficient for the needs of parking over weekends. But, not putting in traffic signal or a way to merge into west bound traffic is a big mistake and we feel it will cause many accidents and fatalities. Already with the traffic flow it’s difficult during heavy traffic times and weekends to make a left hand turn from Millar Ranch Rd unto SR 94. Add additional people who don’t realize how fast the traffic is traveling 55 mph or more and high school beginner drivers, we feel it will become more hazardous and dangerous to traffic. Thank you for considering our concerns about lack of signal or way to merge into west bound traffic at Millar Ranch Rd and SR 94.

Sincerely,
Murray and Sandy Smith
Dear Ms. Terp:

I am writing on behalf on the San Diego Mountain Biking Association and our over 1000 members in full support of the gravel surfaced parking lot in the area to the east of the Sweetwater River, west of Millar Ranch Road, and south of State Route (SR) 94.

This amenity is sorely needed at this area known at the Steel Bridge. It is a popular starting point for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians to access the trails to the west. We applaud the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for working with the Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on this effort.

Sincerely,

Susie Murphy
Executive Director - SDMBA
executivedirector@SDMBA.com
619-316-1757
Kai Johnson
To: Parking_Lot_EA@fws.gov

To Jill Terp
Refuge Manager
USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91910

I’m writing in support of the plans for the new visitor parking area on Millar Ranch Rd. The existing parking area at Singer Ln is small and rugged, which may make it difficult for people to use. The proposed new parking area would certainly serve people much better.

Kai Johnson
San Diego, CA 92116
Dear Jill Terp, Refuse Manager at USFWS,

Happy New Year!

I am supporting the new staging area proposed at the Steel Bridge in Rancho San Diego. This is sorely needed and hope this support would help USFW with this project per information shared by Susie Murphy.

Jill Terp, Refuge Manager, USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex

Thanks,
Chris Lin
Attachment 2

Letter from the State Clearinghouse
January 11, 2019

Victoria Touchstone
USFWS, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Subject: SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements
SCH# 2018124001

Dear Victoria Touchstone:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Environmental Assessment to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on January 10, 2019, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse
Project Title: SR 94/Millar Ranch Road Intersection and Parking Improvements

Lead Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Description: US Fish and Wildlife Service, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, proposes to construct a 43-vehicle parking lot to serve Refuge visitors. The parking lot will be located to the east of the Sweetwater River, to the south of SR-94, and west of Millar Ranch Road in the Spring Valley/Jamul areas of unincorporated San Diego County. To provide safe access into and out of the new parking lot from SR 94, roadway improvements are proposed to SR 94 and Millar Ranch Rd. Construction will occur in two phases over a four month period.

Lead Agency Contact:
Name: Victoria Touchstone
Agency: USFWS, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Phone: 619-476-9150 x 103
Fax
Email
Address: 1080 Gunpowder Point Drive
City: Chula Vista
State: CA
Zip: 91910

Project Location:
County: San Diego
City:
Region:
Lat / Long: 32° 43' 54" N / 116° 56' 24" W
Cross Streets: SR 94 (Campo Rd) and Millar Ranch Rd
Parcel No.:
Township:
Range:
Section:
Base:

Proximity to:
Highways: SR 94
Airports:
Railways:
Waterways: Sweetwater River; Steele Canyon Creek
Schools: Steele Canyon HS
Land Use: national wildlife refuge and public highway

Project Issues:
Aesthetic/Visual; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Flood Plain/Flooding; Recreation/Parks; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian

Reviewing Agencies:
Resources Agency; California Coastal Commission; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 5; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 11; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9; Office of Emergency Services, California; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission; State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality; State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights; Air Resources Board; Transportation Projects

Date Received: 12/12/2018
Start of Review: 12/12/2018
End of Review: 01/10/2019

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.