# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

5275 Leesburg Pike
MS-ES
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/DBTS/BGMTS/078589

Mr. Shawn Moradian
Mason Partners, LLC
3366 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Suite 200
Westlake Village, California 91362

Dear Mr. Moradian,

The response below pertains to your request for clarification on spatial information shown on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Wetlands Mapper for a 36-acre undeveloped property located south of the Ventura Freeway Route 101 and north of Michael Drive, near the city of Thousand Oaks, California. (See map attached).

As stated on our website, the NWI Program and its geospatial data displayed on the Wetlands Mapper show wetland type and extent using a biological definition of wetlands and makes no attempt to establish the geographical scope of jurisdictional wetlands as defined by any federal, state, or local government. Federal regulation of the Nation's wetlands and waterways is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Both EPA and the Corps use the NWI Mapper as a scoping tool to assess the potential for wetlands to exist in a project area, however, any regulatory decisions made by either of these agencies require an onsite wetland delineation by a professional expert. As such, the data provided on the Mapper should only be used for large-scale natural resource analysis or supplemental information to guide field assessments.

The NWI Mapper shows for this property approximately five (5) acres of wetlands identified through photo interpretation using 2018 high resolution aerial imagery. At your request, the NWI has re-evaluated the property for evidence of wetlands using 2022 imagery. Upon further review, the 2022 imagery shows no evidence of wetlands present on the property. In addition to the 2022 aerial imagery, the NWI reviewed the following ancillary data:

1) Soil maps for the site produced by the USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the associated attributes for the soil map units contained within the Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO). Two soil units are mapped for the property: Cropley clay, 0 to 2 percent slopes, and Vina silty clay loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes. Clay soils have properties that may slow the percolation of water into the soil following rain events, however neither of these soils are considered hydric soils (that is, having high potential to support wetlands). The hydrologic properties for both soil units are similar, according to the SSURGO data. Neither soil unit shows any

potential for flooding or ponding, and the depth to the water table is listed as more than 80 inches.

2) The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) for flowlines (i.e., streams) and waterbodies (including lakes, ponds, swamps, and marshes). No waterbodies were identified within the property boundary. The flowline dataset shows the South Branch Arroyo Conejo running along the south boundary of the property, and this feature is visible on the aerial imagery as having been confined to a ditch prior to 1989.

3) Elevation hillshade derivative available as a Web Map Service (WMS) on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Map Service website. The hillshade shows no evidence of depressions on the property to suggest the presence of wetlands.

4) Historical aerial imagery from 1989 through 2022 available on Google Earth Pro. There is no clear evidence on the imagery from 1989 and 1994, prior to the construction of the new interchange on Ventura Highway 101, that wetlands are present on the property. Imagery from 2005 shows flooding on the property, however, this water appears to be ephemeral, as the 2007 imagery shows no evidence of standing water, soil saturation, or hydrophytic vegetation indicative of wetlands. Upon review of all the historical images from 1989 - 2022, it appears any water present on the property occurs only after sufficient rainfall, as the majority of images (21 out of 33 dates) show no presence of water or evidence of recent water.

5) Two letters of jurisdictional determination (JD) from the Los Angeles District Corps, stating no waters of the United States are present on the property.

Wetland photo interpretation is a difficult and complex process, requiring appropriate training and use of aerial imagery and ancillary data layers to make the best possible delineations. It is not an exact science. Physical alterations on the landscape may change the hydrology, making a site wetter or drier. Post processing of aerial imagery may also enhance the vegetation signature, which may lead to confusion by an even an experienced photo interpreter. Therefore, wetlands may be overmapped or undermapped, because rarely does a photo interpreter have an opportunity to see the actual wetland he or she has mapped. When this area was mapped in the early 2000s to 2002 imagery, there was limited historical imagery available to the photo interpreter, which may have played a significant role in wetlands being mapped for the property. Twenty years later there are multiple years and seasons' worth of imagery, which allows for a much more thorough review of the landscape and its hydrology.

Based on the 2022 aerial imagery and supporting ancillary data, the NWI concludes that no wetlands are located on the property. The three (3) wetland polygons currently represented in the Wetlands Mapper will be removed during the next update, which is scheduled to take place in May 2023. The attached map shows examples of the property prior to construction of the new interchange with no visible wetlands (1989), the wetlands currently shown in the NWI Mapper (2018), and the most recent imagery available with no visible wetlands (2022).

If the provided information does not satisfy your request for additional information about this property, please contact Sara Owen, Senior Wetlands Coordinator, National Wetlands Inventory at (406) 430-9011 or Sara_Owen@fws.gov for additional assistance. Thank you for your inquiry and interest in the NWI Program.

Sincerely,

JONATHAN PHINNEY

Digitally signed by JONATHAN PHINNEY
Date: 2023.03.25 16:36:52 -04'00'

Jonathan Phinney
Chief, Branch of Geospatial Mapping
And Technical Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Attachment: NWI Update to Land in Thousand Oaks, CA (map)