

# PAX

Environmental, Inc.

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December 13, 2018

Chris Mathys  
Rhine LP and Morro 94 LLC  
2141 Tuolomne Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

**RE: Letter in Support of Removal of Tree, Shed, and Fire Hydrant from the ESHA for Fuel Tank Demolition Project at 3300 Panorama Drive, Morro Bay, California.**

Dear Chris:

This letter is in support of the removal of two trees, a Monterey cypress tree (*Cupressa macrocarpa*) and a Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*), a shed, and a fire hydrant from the ESHA provided that the following protection measures are followed regarding access and equipment. The Cypress is alive and fallen and the Pine is standing and dead. Both trees, shed, and fire hydrant occur within the environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) at 3300 Panorama Drive, Morro Bay, California (Figure 1 and 2),

### **Fuel Tank Demolition Description and Environmental Mitigation Overview**

The project will be completed in a single phase beginning with removal of two fuel holding tanks, one water tank, associated piping, and shot-crete berms surrounding the holding tank areas, followed with removal of the concrete foundations supporting the tank structures and an additional concrete pad in the northeasterly portion of the site. Project activities are expected to require approximately 2 months to complete. Project activities have been designed to avoid impacts to sensitive biological resources including ESHA (Figure 2), California red-legged frog (CRLF), and nesting birds. A summary of the mitigation measures that will be monitored for compliance are as follows:

- BR-2: Environmental awareness training
- BR-3: Project delineation fencing (i.e., storage and stockpile areas)
- BR-4: Protection measures for ESHA
- BR-5: Protection measures for CRLF
- BR-6: Protection measures for special-status species and nesting birds
- BR-7: Compensatory mitigation requirements

### **Environmental Setting**

The fuel tank area consists of two steel fuel tanks surrounded by gunite covered, earthen berms which form two separate tank basins. Scattered Monterey cypress trees (*Cupressa macrocarpa*) are present within each of the tank basins along with occasional ornamental trees. Disturbed, non- native annual grassland covers each of the basin floors along with various pipeline

components and drainage facilities. An unnamed drainage borders the northernmost tank basin area with stands of Monterey cypress and willow (*Salix* sp.) trees along the creek corridor. A third, much smaller metal water tank is set between and upland of the two fuel tank basins and is surrounded by Monterey cypress trees. Operations buildings and a paved entrance are also present to the south of the fuel tank basins.

### **Tree Removal**

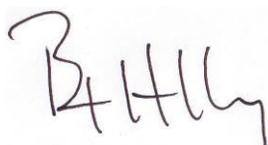
One Monterey Cypress tree (Photo 1) and one Monterey Pine (Photo 2) are proposed to be removed upon approval from the City of Morro Bay. The cypress has fallen and is interfering with the drainage from the site. The other Pine is dead and is not structurally sound. These trees exist within the ESHA zone and therefore should be removed using only the approved access route (Figure 3) and removed using only hand tools by foot. All large equipment and vehicles should be staged outside of the ESHA zone. When removing the trees, the cut pieces should be carried above ground and not dragged. Any signs of anthropological activity should be raked out and cleaned up. All tree removal activity should be monitored by a qualified biologist. A recent biological survey of these trees has shown that there are no active bird nests, nesting behavior, or roosting, and removal of the trees will occur outside of nesting season.

### **Shed and Fire Hydrant Removal**

A shed (Photo 3), with dimensions 4.5' x 6.5' and 7' tall with a roof that is 5.5'x7.5', along with a nearby fire hydrant are planned for removal from the ESHA zone. The shed and fire hydrant can be accessed with minimal impact to the ESHA from Tuscan Ave (Figure 3) where any equipment and vehicles will be stationed. When removing the shed and fire hydrant they will be accessed by foot and only hand tools will be used. The water pipe to the fire hydrant can be capped and left in place. A bucket truck or any like equipment can be used to remove the structures from over the fence while staged on Tuscan Ave. Any signs of anthropological activity should be raked out and cleaned up. All shed removal activity should be monitored by a qualified biologist. The concrete pad that the shed sits on will not be removed. A recent biological survey of nearby trees has shown that there are no active bird nests, nesting behavior, or roosting, and the removal of the shed will occur outside of nesting season.

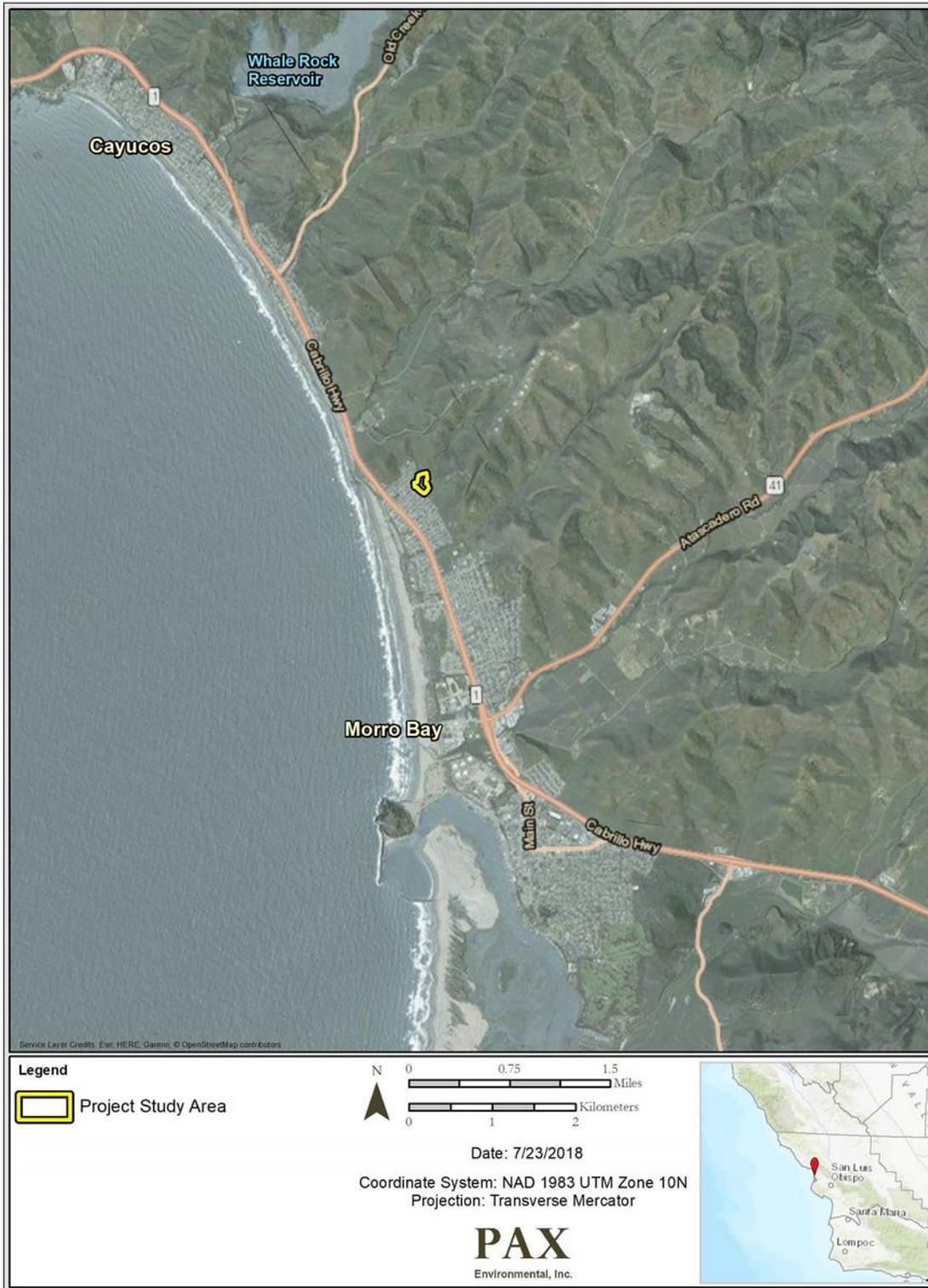
If these guidelines are followed, the removal of the shed, fire hydrant, and trees should have no negative impact on the sensitive species or habitat within ESHA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B Holly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Brian E. Holly, M.S.

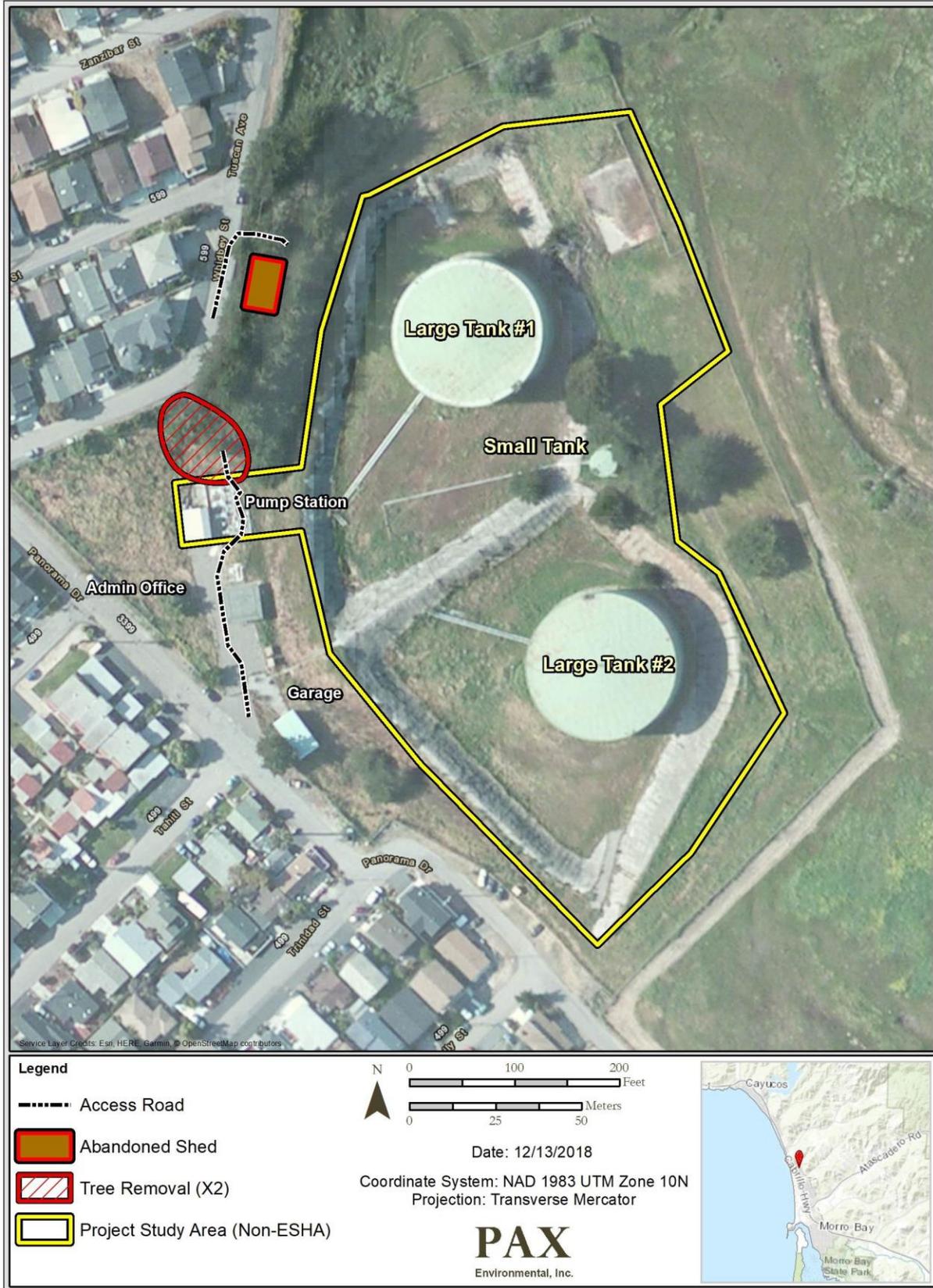
Principal/Senior Ecologist



**Figure 1.** Project vicinity map.



**Figure 2: Project site and ESHA boundary.**



**Figure 3.** Tree and Shed Removal Areas and Approved Access Routes



Photo 1. Fallen Cypress



Photo 2. Dead Monterey Pine



Photo 3. Shed