2.18 Plant Species

2.18.1 Regulatory Setting

USFWS and CDFW have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special-status plant species. "Special-status" species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. *Special status* is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Please see Section 2.20, "Threatened and Endangered Species" for detailed information about these species.

This section of the document discusses all the other special-status plant species, including CDFW species of special concern, USFWS candidate species, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare and endangered plants.

The regulatory requirements for FESA can be found at 16 USC Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR 402. The regulatory requirements for CESA can be found at CFGC Section 2050, et seq. Caltrans projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at CFGC Sections 1900–1913, and CEQA, at California PRC Sections 2100–21177.

2.18.2 Affected Environment

This section is based on the *Natural Environment Study Report* (ICF International 2014) prepared for the project. The report is available on the project website at http://8065interchange.org/.

Botanical surveys in the BSA were conducted on May 15, May 16, October 30, November 13, November 15, 2012, and on February 28, March 7, and April 22, 2013. The early and late spring and fall surveys coincided with the identification periods of special-status plants determined to have the potential to occur in the project region.

Based on searches of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), the CNPS rare plant inventory, and USFWS lists of threatened endangered species for the project region, 17 special-status plant species were identified as occurring in the vicinity of the BSA (Table 2.18-1). The natural communities (see Section 2.16) in the BSA contain potential habitat for 12 of these 17 species. The remaining five species have microhabitat requirements (i.e., alkaline, gabbro, or serpentine soils) that are not present in the BSA or that occur at elevations substantially higher than the elevation of the BSA. Additionally, the relatively high level of historical and ongoing disturbance that is present in most of the BSA detracts from the quality of potential habitat for special-status plant species. No special-status plants were observed during 2012 and 2013

Table 2.18-1. Special-Status Plant Species Identified as Having the Potential to Occur in the Project Region, or That May Be Affected by the Proposed Project

Common Name *Scientific Name*	Status[a] Federal/State/ CRPR	General Habitat Description	Blooming Period	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
California balsamroot *Balsamorhiza macrolepis*	–/–/1B.2	Sometimes on serpentine soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland; 295–5,101 feet	March–June	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. No serpentine soils present. *No effect.*
Stebbin's morning-glory *Calystegia stebbinsii*	E/E/1B.1	Serpentine or gabbro soils in chaparral openings, cismontane woodland; 606–3,576 feet	April–July	Absent	BSA substantially lower than species' elevation range and no serpentine or gabbro soils present. *No effect.*
Pine Hill ceanothus *Ceanothus roderickii*	E/R/1B.2	Serpentine or gabbro soils in chaparral or cismontane woodland; 803–2,066 feet	April–June	Absent	BSA substantially lower than species' elevation range and no serpentine or gabbro soils present. *No effect.*
Hispid bird's-beak *Chloropyron molle* ssp. *hispidum*	–/–/1B.1	Meadow and seeps, valley and foothill grassland, playa, on alkaline soils; 3–508 feet	June–September	Absent	Microhabitat requirements (i.e., alkaline soils) not met in BSA. *No effect.*
Brandegee's clarkia *Clarkia biloba* ssp. *brandegeeae*	–/–/4.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower coniferous forest, often on roadcuts; 246–3,001 feet	May–July	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Dwarf downingia *Downingia pusilla*	–/–/2.2	Vernal pools and mesic valley and foothill grasslands; below 1,459 feet	March–May	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Stinkbells *Fritillaria agrestis*	–/–/4.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, pinyon-juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland, on clay, sometimes serpentinite substrate; 33–5,101 feet	March–June	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
El Dorado bedstraw *Galium californicum* ssp. *sierrae*	E/R/1B.2	On gabbro soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest; 328–1,919 feet	May–June	Absent	BSA substantially lower than species' elevation range and no gabbro soils present. *No effect.*

Common Name ***Scientific Name***	Status[a] **Federal/State/ CRPR**	General Habitat Description	Blooming Period	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop *Gratiola heterosepala*	–/E/1B.2	Clay soils in areas of shallow water, lake margins of swamps and marshes, vernal pool margins; 33–7,791 feet	April–August	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Ahart's dwarf rush *Juncus leiospermus* var. *ahartii*	–/–/1B.2	Wet areas in valley and foothill grassland, vernal pool margins; 98–751 feet	March–May	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Red Bluff dwarf rush *Juncus leiospermus* var. *leiospermus*	–/–/1B.1	Seasonally wet areas in chaparral, cismontane woodland, meadows and seeps, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools; 115–4,101 feet	March–May	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Legenere *Legenere limosa*	–/–/1B.1	Deep, seasonally wet habitats such as vernal pools, ditches, marsh edges, and river banks; below 2,887 feet	April–June	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Pincushion navarretia *Navarretia myersii* ssp. *myersii*	–/–/1B.1	Edges of vernal pools; 66–1,083 feet	April–May	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Sacramento Orcutt grass *Orcuttia viscida*	E/E/1B.1	Vernal pools; 98–328 feet	April–July	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*
Layne's butterweed *Packera layneae*	T/R/1B.2	Rocky serpentinite or gabbro soils in chaparral and foothill woodland; 656–3,281 feet	April–August	Absent	BSA substantially lower than species' elevation range and no serpentine or gabbro soils present. *No effect.*
Tahoe yellow cress *Rorippa subumbellata*	C/E/1B.1	Lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, on decomposed granitic beaches; 6,217–6,233 feet	May–September	Absent	No potential habitat present and BSA substantially lower than species' elevation range. *No effect.*
Sanford's arrowhead *Sagittaria sanfordii*	–/–/1B.2	Freshwater marshes, sloughs, canals, and other slow-moving water habitats; below 2,132 feet	May–October	Present	Potential habitat present but not observed during surveys within blooming period. *No effect.*

[a] Status explanations:

Federal

E = Listed as endangered under the federal ESA.
T = Listed as threatened under the federal ESA.
C = Species for which USFWS has on file sufficient information on biological vulnerability and threat(s) to support issuance of a proposed rule to list, but issuance of the proposed rule is precluded.
— = No listing status.

State

E = Listed as endangered under CESA.
R = Listed as rare under the CESA. This category is no longer used for newly listed plants, but some plants previously listed as rare retain this designation.
— = No listing status.

CRPR

1B = List 1B species: rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.
2 = List 2 species: rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.
4 = List 4 species: limited distribution; species on a watch list
.1 = Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened—high degree and immediacy of threat).
.2 = Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened).

* = presumed extirpated in that county.

Note: In March, 2010, California Department of Fish and Game (now CDFW) changed the name of “CNPS List” or “CNPS Ranks” to “California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR).” This was done to reduce confusion over the fact that CNPS and CDFW jointly manage the Rare Plant Status Review groups (300+ botanical experts from government, academia, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector) and that the rank assignments are the product of a collaborative effort and not solely a CNPS assignment.

botanical surveys, and none have been previously reported in the BSA. Based on the field survey results and the lack of recorded occurrences in the BSA, special-status plant species are not expected to occur in the BSA.

2.18.3 Environmental Consequences

Special-status plants were not observed within the BSA during appropriately timed botanical surveys; therefore, special-status plants are not expected to occur in the BSA and would not be affected by the proposed project.

2.18.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No measures are necessary.

2.18.5 References Cited

ICF International. 2014. *Natural Environment Study Report – I-80/SR 65 Interchange Improvements Project, Placer County, Interstate 80 and State Route 65*. Sacramento, CA. November.