



Statement of Qualifications

Balk Biological Inc.

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OVERVIEW

Balk Biological is a full-service biological consulting firm headquartered in Encinitas, California. The company has been providing its expertise to a variety of public- and private-sector clients since 2006. Prior to 2006, company founder, president, and senior biologist Michelle L. Balk, M.S., spent five years gaining a broad background in the consulting field, including project management.

Balk Biological generally focuses on the Southern California market, with current and past projects in San Diego, Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Kern Counties. Recent projects, however, have taken BBC to central and northern California (San Luis Obispo, Solano, and Mendocino Counties), thereby greatly expanding the firm's biological expertise in a very short period of time. Balk Biological serves many types of clients, from the single-family homeowner seeking to build an addition to his/her home to the state agency seeking the best management of its resources to the private or public utility company desiring an increase in green energy production.

Balk Biological's team is experienced in and regularly performs a full complement of biological consultant services, including:

- ☒ Vegetation community mapping,
- ☒ General and special-status floral and wildlife surveys,
- ☒ Wetlands delineation and permitting,
- ☒ Habitat restoration,
- ☒ Environmental compliance monitoring during construction,
- ☒ Biological resource impact assessment, and
- ☒ Biological document preparation.

Skills in these areas are continually being updated, with team members regularly attending specialized trainings, workshops, and even university-level coursework. In addition, Balk Biological regularly teaches courses on plant groups such as asters or special-status plant species of Southern California and has, in the past, provided *pro bono* plant identification services for the California Native Plant Society.

CERTIFICATIONS

Balk Biological is certified as a:

- ☒ Women Business Enterprise through the California Public Utilities Commission,
- ☒ Small Business/Microbusiness through the State of California Department of General Services,
- ☒ Caltrans Disadvantaged Business Enterprise,
- ☒ Emerging Local/Small Local Business Enterprise through the City of San Diego, and
- ☒ San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) A&E, Construction, and Planning (pending) Bench firm

CONSULTANT TEAM

Michelle L. Balk, M.S.:



Ms. Balk is the founder and president of Balk Biological. She has over 19 years of experience in the environmental consulting field in California. Her specialties include project management, vegetation community mapping, special-status plant surveys, nesting bird surveys, environmental document preparation, and training and leading other botanists in large-scale floristic surveys. She also performs wetlands delineations and permitting, special-status wildlife surveys and habitat assessments, and construction monitoring of large, linear construction projects. She has participated in the preparation of a

wide variety of environmental documents, including biotechnical reports in support of CEQA documents and habitat conservation plans pursuant to Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act. Ms. Balk regularly teaches botany classes for the California Native Plant Society.

Ms. Balk holds a Bachelor's of Science in Zoology from Iowa State University and a Master's of Science from the University of Akron (Ohio) (emphasis in Ecology and Evolution).

Brian S. Lohstroh, B.S.:



Mr. Lohstroh is a USFWS-permitted biologist with over 20 years of expertise in Southern California ecology. He is permitted to conduct surveys for Quino checkerspot butterfly, California gnatcatcher, fairy shrimp, and southwestern willow flycatcher, and is an authorized handler of flat-tail horned lizard, arroyo toad, and desert tortoise. He has successfully completed and managed a wide variety of projects including those focused on wildlife surveys, habitat assessments, exotic predator control programs, and large construction projects requiring coordination of subcontracted biological monitors. Mr. Lohstroh is experienced in writing

biological assessments and technical reports, conducting wetland delineations, habitat restoration, botanical surveys including focused rare plant surveys, vegetation mapping, pitfall trapping, environmental permitting and impact analysis. Mr. Lohstroh has also participated in several research projects focusing on the flora and fauna of southern California, including the Long Term Ecological Monitoring Project on Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, the Bird and Plant Atlas Projects with the San Diego Natural History Museum, and the Desert Tortoise Reproductive Study conducted by the Biological Research Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. Mr. Lohstroh regularly conducts nesting bird surveys for large scale projects, including the Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair Project along the International Border, SDG&E Wood to Steel, and the recently completed Sunrise Power Link.

Mr. Lohstroh holds a Bachelor's of Science in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution from the University of California, San Diego.

Brynne Mulrooney, B.S.:

Ms. Mulrooney is a wildlife biologist and project manager with more than 19 years of experience. Ms. Mulrooney's wildlife biology experience focuses on avian studies, including nesting bird monitoring. She also has experience conducting botany surveys and wetland delineations. She is knowledgeable of federal, regional, and local regulatory frameworks and prepares biological reports in compliance with policies such as the National Environmental Policy Act, California Environmental Quality Act, and Endangered Species Act, as well as guidelines provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and Multiple Species

Conservation Program (MSCP). She has participated in wildlife surveys, plant surveys, and habitat assessments in more than seven states. As a biological consultant in California, Ms. Mulrooney's project experience includes conducting wildlife habitat assessments, avian presence/absence surveys, vegetation mapping, rare plant surveys, wetland delineations, and biological monitoring on various construction projects. She has experience managing multiple task order on-call contracts, assigning appropriate staff, meeting deliverable and budget goals, and providing up-to-date communications with the client.

Ms. Mulrooney holds a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida.

Shelley Lawrence, M.S.:

Ms. Lawrence is a field biologist with over 10 years of experience with ecological projects in Southern California. As a biologist with Balk Biological Inc. for over 6 years she has developed a sharp skill set in special-status plant surveys, utilization of a plant dichotomous key, and environmental compliance monitoring. Her additional project experience as a field biologist include vegetation mapping, nesting bird surveys, environmental permit review, technical report production, and coordination with wildlife agencies. Her skills have been applied to a multitude of habitats throughout southern California including coastal dunes, coastal marshes,

coastal sage scrub, vernal pools, riparian and wetlands, chaparral, foothills, and desert. Ms. Lawrence regularly manages projects which have called on her ability to communicate effectively with clients, manage complex budgets, assign staff, and meet project deadlines. She has had the opportunity to work with private landowners, the City of San Diego's Stormwater and Transportation Department, the County of San Diego, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDGE), the United States Navy, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Ms. Lawrence holds a Bachelor's and Master's of Science in Biological Sciences with a concentration in Ecology from California State University, San Marcos.

SELECT RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE



SANDAG, MidCoast Transit Corridor Project November 2017 – Present. Provided biological monitoring, nesting bird surveys, and active nest monitoring to ensure that the project remains in compliance with environmental permits associated with the 11-mile alignment from the Santa Fe Depot in Downtown San Diego to the University City community. Conducted special-status wildlife survey effort and prepared technical reports to be submitted to wildlife agencies.

San Diego Gas & Electric, San Diego County, CA, Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) Biological Services. January 2012 – Present. Balk Biological has been awarded several

contracts as a sub-consultant to AECOM including the Widget, FIRM, and Cleveland National Forest projects. These projects involved evaluating potential biological impacts from operations and maintenance activities being conducted under SDG&E's Subregional NCCP and included conducting baseline biological surveys, nesting bird surveys, rare plant surveys, sensitive wildlife surveys, vegetation mapping, and compliance monitoring and subsequent reports. This project also required effective communication and coordination with multiple construction crews on-site, as well as SDGE project managers.



City of San Diego Stormwater and Transportation, Public Works, and Public Utilities Departments, City of San Diego, CA, As-needed and Emergency Support Services. 2015 – Present. Services included special-status plant and wildlife surveys, vegetation mapping, wetland analysis, vernal pool monitoring, noise monitoring, and biological compliance monitoring during construction. Coordinated with multiple agencies including USFWS, USACE, CDFW, RWQCB, and the California Coastal Commission to ensure adherence to environmental permits. Several contracts have been awarded to Balk Biological including storm drain replacement projects, emergency stormwater monitoring, Tijuana River Maintenance and Mitigation Monitoring, Waterways Maintenance Plan project, and Otay Truck Route construction.





Orange County Transportation Authority I-5 Widening Project, County of Orange, CA. January 2020 – Present. Prepared environmental training for the construction crew and consulted with Caltrans to allow vehicles to drive through a red-tailed hawk (RTHA) nest buffer. Monitored RTHA nest while construction crews moved through buffer and provided environmental monitoring results to CALTRANS to demonstrate there was no disturbance to the nest and compliance with permit. Conducted bi-weekly nest surveys and monitoring to direct crews on vegetation removal; monitored vegetation removal by first ascending in bucket truck to confirm inactive nest/no nest contents and then monitoring nest removal.

City of San Diego Department of Transportation and Stormwater San Dieguito East Mitigation Site Project, San Diego, CA. February - June 2020. Performed vegetation mapping, wetlands delineation, and general wildlife and focused rare plant surveys, and prepared wetlands delineation report and draft biological technical report. Mapped occurrences of rare plants and wildlife in the ArcGIS Collector application for import into ArcGIS Desktop, and mapped vegetation on hard-copy maps. Coordinated with Client to identify potential areas of spoils placement during construction of mitigation site.

City of San Diego, Mission Bay Park Improvement Zone Project, San Diego, CA. December 2018 – December 2019. As a sub-consultant to Dudek, Balk Biological provided biological consulting services in support of a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Mission Bay Park Improvement Zone. Biological consulting services include an assessment of biological resources occurring and potentially occurring within the Biological Survey Area, vegetation mapping, focused and protocol surveys for special-status plants and wildlife, and the preparation of a Biological Technical Report.



Terra-Gen Development Company, Campo Wind Energy Project, County of San Diego, CA. July 2018 – August 2018. As a sub-consultant to Dudek, Balk Biological surveyed remote land within the Campo Kumeyaay Nation and under the management of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Vegetation mapping was conducted according to Holland (1986)/Oberbauer *et al.* (2008) and ephemeral drainages and other Waters of the U.S. were mapped under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Industry standard

software including ArcGIS Collector were used to collect data in the field and perform quality control review in the office.

Concordia Homes Safari Highlands Ranch Residential Development Project, Escondido, CA. April 2015. Performed special-status plant surveys on approximately 1000 rugged acres of grassland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and oak woodlands. Discovered several species not formerly identified on the property.