

FINAL

INITIAL STUDY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

MOUNT SAN JACINTO STATE PARK
ROUND VALLEY MEADOW AND STREAM
HEADCUT REPAIR AND ELEVATION RESTORATION
PROJECT



APRIL 2006



State of California
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT: Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration

LEAD AGENCY: California Department of Parks and Recreation

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS: The Initial Study for this Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review at:

- Inland Empire District Headquarters
California Department of Parks & Recreation
17801 Lake Perris Drive
Perris, California 92570
- Mount San Jacinto State Park
California Department of Parks & Recreation
25905 Highway 243
Idyllwild, California 92549

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Parks and Recreation (Lead Agency) proposes to restore the degraded lower portion of Round Valley Meadow, in Mount San Jacinto State Park, by borrowing nearby (on-site) native soil material to fill a gully created by past disturbance of the seasonal unnamed stream draining the meadow. The stream will be restored to a stable, natural course at its natural meadow surface elevation. The affected reach of meadow and stream totals about 275 feet in length and covers about 0.1 acre. Borrowed material will come from two nearby upland and depositional sites, one about 1/10-acre and the other about 1/3-acre; these areas will be stripped of an average of 1 foot of topsoil and the resultant 700 to 900 cubic yards of material will be used to fill the gully and restore natural meadow grade.

Excavation of the borrow areas and transport of material to the fill site will be accomplished using a Skidsteer or equivalent, a small backhoe-loader. One or two such pieces of equipment will be required. This motorized equipment will be delivered to the Wilderness worksite, and later removed, by helicopter airlift. An exception to the prohibition of motorized equipment in State Wilderness is required, and will be authorized consistent with the provisions of DPR's Department Operations Manual (DOM), Section 0304.5.4. Compacting of fill material, salvage/harvest of logs and other large woody debris for construction of grade control structures, construction of short sections of log-rail fence, disposal of surplus woody debris (slash) by burning in small piles, and other hand labor will be performed by California Conservation Corps crews on 2 to 3 extended backcountry "spike" assignments, each ranging from 5 to 10 days in duration. The CCC crews will use hand tools (shovels, McLeods, etc.) and power tools (chain saws, compactors), and will camp in existing primitive campsites near the worksite. Disturbed areas will be restored to a natural topographic appearance, and revegetated with native vegetation. The purpose of this project is to stop the continuing

erosion of the stream through the meadow, which threatens to down-cut through and cause drying of virtually the entire Round Valley Meadow.

A copy of the Initial Study is attached. Questions or comments regarding **implementation of this project** may be addressed to:

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Inland Empire District
California Department of Parks & Recreation
17801 Lake Perris Drive
Perris, California 92570
Phone: (951) 443-2410
Fax: (951) 657-2736
Email: lcarver@parks.ca.gov

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the proposed project and finds that these documents reflect the independent judgment of DPR. DPR, as lead agency, also confirms that the project mitigation measures detailed in these documents are feasible and will be implemented as stated in the Negative Declaration.

 /s/ Douglas Rischbieter /for/
Larrynn Carver
District Environmental Coordinator

 January 24, 2006
Date

Mount San Jacinto SP
Round Valley Restoration IS/MND
California Department of Parks & Recreation

TABLE of CONTENTS

<u>Chapter/Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	4
3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST.....	10
I. Aesthetics.....	13
II. Agricultural Resources.....	15
III. Air Quality.....	16
IV. Biological Resources.....	18
V. Cultural Resources.....	23
VI. Geology and Soils.....	27
VII. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	30
VIII. Hydrology and Water Quality.....	33
IX. Land Use and Planning.....	37
X. Mineral Resources.....	38
XI. Noise.....	39
XII. Population and Housing.....	41
XIII. Public Services.....	42
XIV. Recreation.....	44
XV. Transportation/Traffic.....	46
XVI. Utilities and Service Systems.....	48
4 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.....	50
5 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES.....	52
6 REFERENCES.....	54
7 REPORT PREPARATION.....	55

Appendices

- A** MAPS
- B** PROJECT DESIGN GRAPHICS
- C** CNDDDB RECORD SEARCH
- D** PUBLIC COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project at Mount San Jacinto State Park, Riverside County, California. This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code §21000 *et seq.*, and the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15000 *et seq.* Changes since the preparation of the January 2006 Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration are highlighted in half tone.

An Initial Study is conducted by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment [CEQA Guidelines §15063(a)]. If there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064(a). However, if the lead agency determines that revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the applicant mitigate the potentially significant effects to a less-than-significant level, a Mitigated Negative Declaration may be prepared instead of an EIR [CEQA Guidelines §15070(b)]. The lead agency prepares a written statement describing the reasons a proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, why an EIR need not be prepared. This IS/MND conforms to the content requirements under CEQA Guidelines §15071.

1.2 LEAD AGENCY

The lead agency is the public agency with primary approval authority over the proposed project. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15051(b)(1), "the lead agency will normally be an agency with general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose." The lead agency for the proposed project is DPR. The contact person for the lead agency is:

Douglas Rischbieter
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Central Valley District
22708 Broadway
Columbia, California 95310
(209) 795-3488
Email: dougr@water.ca.gov

1.3 PURPOSE AND DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project at Mount San Jacinto State Park. Mitigation measures have also been incorporated into the project to eliminate any potentially significant impacts or reduce them to a less-than-significant level.

This document is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction.
This chapter provides an introduction to the project and describes the purpose and organization of this document.
- Chapter 2 - Project Description.
This chapter describes the reasons for the project, scope of the project, and project objectives.
- Chapter 3 - Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.
This chapter identifies the significance of potential environmental impacts, explains the environmental setting for each environmental issue, and evaluates the potential impacts identified in the CEQA Environmental (Initial Study) Checklist. Mitigation measures are incorporated, where appropriate, to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- Chapter 4 - Mandatory Findings of Significance
This chapter identifies and summarizes the overall significance of any potential impacts to natural and cultural resources, cumulative impacts, and impact to humans, as identified in the Initial Study.
- Chapter 5 - Summary of Mitigation Measures.
This chapter summarizes the mitigation measures incorporated into the project as a result of the Initial Study.
- Chapter 6 - References.
This chapter identifies the references and sources used in the preparation of this IS/MND. It also provides a list of those involved in the preparation of this document.
- Chapter 7 - Report Preparation
This chapter provides a list of those involved in the preparation of this document.

1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 3 of this document contains the Environmental (Initial Study) Checklist that identifies the potential environmental impacts (by environmental issue) and a brief discussion of each impact resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Based on the IS and supporting environmental analysis provided in this document, the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project would result in less-than-significant impacts for the following issues: aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities and service systems.

The Department received three comment letters on this project. These comment letters, and the Department's replies, are included in Appendix D. The comments resulted in minor changes and clarifications within this Final Mitigated Negative Declaration.

In accordance with §15064(f) of the CEQA Guidelines, a Mitigated Negative Declaration shall be prepared if the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment after the inclusion of mitigation measures in the project. Based on the available project information and the environmental analysis presented in this document, there is no substantial evidence that, after the incorporation of mitigation measures, the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment. The Department will adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

CHAPTER 2

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project at Mount San Jacinto State Park, located near the town of Palm Springs, Riverside County, California. The proposed project would restore the hydrology of the Round Valley meadow, a sensitive but degraded and threatened 7-acre wetland feature, by restoring the thalweg elevation of the meadow's seasonal stream. Compaction due to volunteer trails and related visitor activity has caused entrenchment and headcutting of a portion of this stream. This erosion, which has occurred over recent decades, unnaturally dewateres the terminal end of the meadow and threatens to advance hundreds of yards further upstream and destroy the hydrology and wetland character and habitat of the entire meadow. This advancing erosion would also overload downstream areas with thousands of cubic yards of fine sediments, degrading water quality and aquatic habitat. This project will restore and protect high-value wetland meadow conditions, and prevent the aforementioned impacts of downstream sedimentation.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION

Mount San Jacinto State Park is approximately 13,770 acres in size and located in the high mountains of central Riverside County, about 5 miles west of the city of Palm Springs. The Park is foremost known for its alpine terrain with desert views and its 9,900 acres of unspoiled State Wilderness, but the 7-acre Round Valley meadow is a unique feature and supports a wetland plant community unmatched in the Park. The Round Valley meadow is roughly midway by trail between the upper Palm Springs Aerial Tramway station and the 10,834' San Jacinto Peak, making it a relatively common destination of Wilderness visitors. The meadow is associated with a small seasonal stream that originates from the southeast slopes below the 10,670' Jean Peak and nearby Wellman Divide, and is fed by additional springs that emerge in and around the meadow. The stream is officially unnamed, but makes up what could be considered the "middle fork" headwaters of Long Valley Creek. Round Valley is surrounded by several designated primitive campsites, popular with overnight Wilderness visitors. The project site is at the downstream (eastern) end of the meadow, immediately adjacent to a small footbridge that allows hikers to depart from the main trail (around the southern side of the meadow) and access the campsites around the northern side of the meadow. Maps of the general Park and project locations are in Appendix A.

2.3 BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The Round Valley Meadow is an exceedingly uncommon and fragile wetland habitat, made all the more rare by its isolation high above the Southern California desert. This meadow, and the meadow's seasonal stream, have been subject to periodic disturbances that appear to be associated with "volunteer trails" developed during dry periods. Soil compaction and vegetation damage/removal is a consequence of this visitor activity, and in the middle of the meadow it has resulted in collection and concentration of surface flow from what would otherwise be dispersed, standing and low-velocity flowing water. This unnatural concentration of surface flow has accelerated erosion of the meadow's fragile soil, and opened a deep rent in the wetland, soil, and subsoil and the meadow's eastern (downstream) end. This scouring erosion, which has created a series of headcuts up to 10 feet deep, is poised to continue westward and upslope. The largest headcut (also known as a "nick point") is presently temporarily arrested in the roots of meadow-edge conifers, but once these roots are undermined the erosion will accelerate and the damage will be irreparable. In 2002, the restoration of Mount San Jacinto State Park hydrologic resources, including the Round Valley Meadow, was identified and adopted as a goal of the Mount San Jacinto State Park General Plan.

Left unchecked, progressive erosion and headcutting of the now-confined, channelized, and lowered stream will cause a resultant lowering of the water table. Once the meadow is unnaturally dried in this fashion, it will allow invasion by upland plants and its wetland character and habitat will be greatly and permanently diminished. This project will restore the natural wetland and streamside elevations, eliminate the headcut and concentrated streamflow, and discourage future volunteer trails through signage and split-rail or pole-fencing at the most critical points.

While the downcutting and eroded area has not yet advanced to a point where repair is impossible, it nevertheless requires work of a scale not feasibly accomplished with hand labor alone. For this reason, an exception to the prohibition of motorized equipment in State Wilderness is required, and will be authorized consistent with the provisions of DPR's Department Operations Manual (DOM), Section 0304.5.4. These techniques proposed to be used for stream and meadow grade restoration, though relatively innovative and uncommon, have been successfully implemented on a similar scale in a meadow in a Sierra Nevada State Park (Calaveras Big Trees) and in several other Northern California watershed restoration projects.

2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This Project proposes to lift the entrenched meadow-portion of the meadow's seasonal stream out of its severely-eroded unnatural ditch, by filling the void with nearby native soil and stabilizing grade through application of large woody debris (logs salvaged from the meadow's edge). This will eliminate the "hydraulic drop" from the meadow into the chasm, allowing the water a much longer, slower, and less erosive path through undisturbed wetland vegetation. The stream course will meander, in a dispersed

fashion similar to that common in the undisturbed areas of the meadow, to its stable, rocky channel through the downstream forest. Thus lowering (restoring) the gradient of this portion of the meadow's seasonal stream will stop headcutting and erosion of meadow soils, and will permanently ensure stability and natural wetland function of the Meadow.

Elevating the stream channel will likely raise the water table in the Round Valley Meadow. This will give a competitive advantage to the native wetland plants there, and also may enhance summer and fall flow in downstream areas. Other objectives of this project include maintaining the access around the edge of the meadow to the primitive campsites (last page of Appendix A), and interpreting the value of this unique wetland resource to Wilderness visitors.

2.5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Department of Parks and Recreation (Lead Agency) proposes to excavate approximately 700 to 900 cubic yards of upland and/or previously deposited eroded soil and place it into a severely eroded and entrenched seasonal stream channel. This fill will affect and repair about 200 feet of degraded stream. Work will be accomplished with a small backhoe-loader, delivered to and removed from the project site by helicopter airlift. The airlift will occur in the early morning, over about a 2- to 3-hour period, on one day at project commencement, and again for a second day of similar duration at project completion. Hand labor (with shovels, chainsaws, wheelbarrows, etc.) will be provided by crews from the California Conservation Corps, who will camp at the nearby primitive campsites for several days at a time. The stream course will be rerouted over stable, undisturbed wetland vegetation adjacent to the fill area. Live and dead logs will be recruited from nearby forest, as a source of large woody debris and/or log weirs for surface grade stabilization. Rerouted seasonal streamflow will discharge into a stable channel at the downstream end of the meadow.

Borrowed material will come from two sparsely-forested upland locations within a few hundred feet of the fill site. Topsoil and some subsoil, averaging about one foot deep over the two areas totaling about a half-acre, will be excavated by the backhoe loader and ferried to the fill site by loader bucket and wheelbarrows. Some water, if available, will be piped by gravity from a developed spring at the west end of the meadow, conveyed by a series of standard garden hoses approximately 1,400' to the eastern end of the meadow and a temporary portable tank. This water will be used to aid soil compaction in the fill zone, and to control dust in the borrow area, if any.

At project completion, disturbed areas, including borrow areas, will be regraded to mimic the natural topography and rehabilitated through scatter of leaf-litter and revegetation. The route followed by the Skidsteer between the borrow areas and the fill site may require scarification (with hand tools) and mulching with leaf-litter, if significant topsoil compaction occurs. Limbs and "slash" that may be byproducts of trees and logs used for the project also will be used as scatter for erosion control in a manner of natural appearance; excess limbs and slash (if any) will be burned near the worksite in

small piles under the terms and conditions of a local burning permit. The trail crossing the stream at the foot of the meadow may be rerouted slightly, to avoid damage to restored areas and prevent recurrence of activities that contributed to the long-developing erosion problem. At popular places where off-trail use enters the meadow, a split-rail or pole fence will be constructed from nearby trees up to 8" in diameter. Small interpretive panels and/or other signage, to deter meadow foot traffic, will be added to these fenced and other points at the beginning of the next peak use season.

2.6 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

The construction window for this project would be an approximately 30-day period sometime between September 5, 2006 and November 15, 2006, inclusive. Work is scheduled for this season because day and overnight Wilderness use diminishes dramatically in late summer and early fall, and because instream work will be done when the seasonal stream at the project site is dry or nearly dry. Furthermore, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (the predominant access route to the site) will be closed for approximately three weeks during September for scheduled maintenance, allowing construction activities to occur with an absolute minimum of public disturbance or inconvenience. However, if hydrologic or other conditions are not suitable for project construction during the 2006 period, work may be rescheduled to the same period in a subsequent calendar year.

All existing areas of the Park would remain open to the public during construction, except for: portions of 1 or 2 parking lots (at the lower station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway) where equipment will be assembled prior to airlift; and 3 to 4 campsites adjacent to the project area that will be used by work crews and for staging. However, during excavation and movement of borrow material, hikers may be temporarily rerouted away from (around) areas where equipment is operating. It also may not be possible for hikers to completely circumnavigate Round Valley Meadow; instead, access to the north side of the meadow may need to occur only by first walking around the west side.

All on-site work would occur between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., up to 7 days a week; the two occurrences of helicopter airlifts may occur earlier than 7:30 owing to necessary cooler atmospheric conditions. Areas around the construction site would be barricaded off, as necessary, to deter unsafe access. Inconvenience to the public would be negligible, but the noise of motorized equipment operating will contrast will normal public expectation of peaceful Wilderness experience during these daytime hours.

Work will be performed by one or two Conservation Crews of 12-14 people each, equipped with hand tools, and 1-4 DPR staff may also be on-site at any one time. Though most work would be performed with small power or hand tools, one or two backhoe-loaders will be used to excavate and distribute fill dirt. Once in advance and once following completion of the project, a series of about 3 helicopter trips (each during an approximately 2-hour period) will move these backhoe-loaders and other equipment between the Park's main parking lot (at the foot of the Tramway) and the worksite.

Staging areas for construction equipment and materials will be in an existing clearing, just aside the foot of Round Valley Meadow; the borrow areas are within a few hundred feet of the restoration area and depicted on the first figure in Appendix B.

2.7 VISITATION TO MOUNT SAN JACINTO STATE PARK

Annual attendance at Mount San Jacinto State Park averages about 375,000 visitors per year. However, only about 20,000 (5%) actually venture into the State Wilderness. Backcountry use declines nominally in advance of and following Labor Day Weekend, hence the proposed work schedule is concentrated during this period. Visitation is minimal during periods when the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is inoperable, such as during the anticipated September, 2006 timeframe.

The proposed project is not expected to have any impact on future Park attendance. However, after completion, the proposed project site may become more attractive as an interpretive opportunity.

2.8 CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Restoration of the Round Valley Meadow was identified in 2000 as a high priority during the Resource Inventory phase of the Mount San Jacinto State Park General Plan. The proposed construction of the Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project is consistent with that General Plan, and also with local plans and policies in effect. The use of motorized equipment in State Wilderness, for the purpose of resource management and restoration, is authorized in certain circumstances by DOM Section 0304.5.4.

2.9 DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS

DPR has approval authority for the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project. Other agencies that are expected to exercise approval authority for elements of the project include the California Department of Fish and Game (Streambed Alteration Agreement under Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code); the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Quality Waiver or Certification to be issued under Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act); and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, activity authorized under Nationwide Permit #27).

2.10 RELATED PROJECTS

DPR often has other, relatively small maintenance programs and rehabilitation projects planned for this and other Park units, but none at Mt. San Jacinto State Park are related to the proposed Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project. Other ongoing and recently completed work at Mount San Jacinto State Park includes the improvement and reroute of the Stone Creek Campground ADA-compliant trail, the Idyllwild Zone fuels biodiversity project, the Point of Rocks Neighborhood Fuel Modification project, and the Live Tree Thinning Project in Stone Creek and Idyllwild Campgrounds to restore forest density to a healthy level through removal of dead and other hazard trees. No additional work, other than regular maintenance, is currently in progress or planned for this unit.

CHAPTER 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration
2. Lead Agency Name & Address: California Department of Parks and Recreation
3. Contact Person & Phone Number: Douglas Rischbieter, Environmental Scientist
(209) 795-3488
4. Project Location: Mount San Jacinto State Park
5. Project Sponsor Name & Address: California Department of Parks and Recreation
Inland Empire District
17801 Lake Perris Drive
Perris, California 92570
6. General Plan Designation: State Wilderness
7. Zoning: Recreation
8. Description of Project: Excavate approximately 700 to 900 cubic yards of upland and/or previously deposited eroded soil and place it into a severely eroded and entrenched seasonal stream channel. This fill will affect and repair about 200 feet of degraded stream. Work will be accomplished with a small backhoe-loader, delivered to and removed from the project site by helicopter airlift. Hand labor (with shovels, chainsaws, wheelbarrows, etc.) will be provided by crews from the California Conservation Corps, who will camp at the nearby primitive campsites for several days at a time. The stream course will be rerouted over stable, undisturbed wetland vegetation adjacent to the fill area. Live and dead logs will be recruited from nearby forest, as a source of large woody debris and/or log weirs for surface grade stabilization. Rerouted seasonal streamflow will discharge into a stable channel at the downstream end of the meadow. Disturbed areas, including borrow areas, will be regraded to mimic the natural topography and rehabilitated through scatter of leaf-litter and revegetation. Excess litter and slash, if any, will be burned on-site in small piles.
9. Surrounding Land Uses & Setting: Refer to Chapter 3 of this document (Section IX, Land Use Planning)
10. Approval Required from Other Public Agencies: California Department of Fish and Game for compliance with Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code; Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board for compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (activity authorized under Nationwide Permit #27).

1. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact", as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None |

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that, although the original scope of the proposed project **COULD** have had a significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** or its functional equivalent will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated impact" on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.

I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.

/s/ Douglas Rischbieter /for/
Larrynn Carver
District Environmental Coordinator

January 24, 2006
Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers, except "No Impact", that are adequately supported by the information sources cited. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact does not apply to the project being evaluated (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on general or project-specific factors (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must consider the whole of the project-related effects, both direct and indirect, including off-site, cumulative, construction, and operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, the checklist answers must indicate whether that impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate when there is sufficient evidence that a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change may occur in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.
4. A "Mitigated Negative Declaration" (Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated) applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures, prior to declaration of project approval, has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR (including a General Plan) or Negative Declaration [CCR, Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA, § 15063(c)(3)(D)]. References to an earlier analysis should:
 - a) Identify the earlier analysis and state where it is available for review.
 - b) Indicate which effects from the environmental checklist were adequately analyzed in the earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and whether these effects were adequately addressed by mitigation measures included in that analysis.
 - c) Describe the mitigation measures in this document that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and indicate to what extent they address site-specific conditions for this project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate references to information sources for potential impacts into the checklist or appendix (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, biological assessments). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should include an indication of the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. A source list should be appended to this document. Sources used or individuals contacted should be listed in the source list and cited in the discussion.
8. Explanation(s) of each issue should identify:
 - a) the criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate the significance of the impact addressed by each question **and**
 - b) the mitigation measures, if any, prescribed to reduce the impact below the level of significance.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

I. AESTHETICS.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is one of the most visited units of the California State Park System, and aesthetic resources are abundant throughout the Park. Whether it is the imagery of the sculptural branching pattern of the manzanita dominating the slopes along the west side of the Park or the strong vertical lines of the pine forests reaching upward towards the crisp blue sky, such scenes all contribute to the Park's grandeur and spirit. From the grand peaks and ridgelines to the intimate scale of the quiet meadows, the visitors begin to shape their own aesthetic value for the Park.

Walking upon a bed of fallen pine needles while taking in the fresh scent of the pine forest or sitting atop a ridgeline taking in the numerous scenic vistas, are only two of the many characteristics that make Mount San Jacinto State Park a special place. But if a single element stands out, it is the opportunity for solitude. Once you become aware of your presence within the wilderness and recognize the elements that make up the whole, the natural quiet inherent to the wilderness becomes apparent. This intangible and difficult-to-quantify quality is distinctive to Mount San Jacinto State Park because the majority of the Park is designated as a wilderness. And with the Park being in close proximity to highly populated areas, the opportunity for solitude becomes much more welcome.

The Round Valley Meadow is unique in the Park: it is the only formation of its kind. The aesthetics of the meadow are immeasurably enhanced by its interrelationship with the meadow's seasonal stream and the looming destinations of Jean and San Jacinto Peaks. It affords scenic surprises in all seasons: verdant with spring wildflowers, misty on cold fall mornings, pristine expanses of snow in winter. The meadow-forest interface and moist conditions attract diverse wildlife and enhance the experiences of almost every visitor to this destination in the Mount San Jacinto State Wilderness.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project area is only visible from a short section of trail. Construction activities will be short in duration, completed within about a month, thus scenic impacts are not expected to be significant. Restoring the creek and meadow to the natural conditions that existed prior to stream downcutting will improve aesthetic values, so scenic resources would be enhanced and not damaged by this project.
- b) Restoring the creek channel to the natural conditions that existed prior to downcutting will improve aesthetic values, so scenic resources would not be damaged by this project. The project has been designed to avoid removal of large or significant trees or rocks. Some meadowside trees may be affected in the future by a higher water table in the meadow; the scenic impact is not expected to be significant as the meadow naturally reclaims areas where upland vegetation has encroached over decades of meadow disturbance. Restoration of natural conditions will not affect the view from the nearby trail.
- c) Restoring the creek channel to the natural conditions that existed prior to stream downcutting will improve aesthetic values. However, short-term effects to adjacent forest and meadow settings would occur as vegetation is disturbed for rehabilitation work. From past experience, meadow plants will reoccupy the disturbed area during the first growing season following construction. Replacement seedling trees will be transplanted into the recontoured borrow areas, in numbers greater than the number removed in these areas, at project completion as part of the project. No significant adverse impact.
- d) Lighting is not an element of this project and no new light sources would be introduced into the landscape. All construction work would be limited to daylight hours, eliminating the need for work lights. This project would create no new source of light or glare and, therefore, would have no impact in this respect.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is zoned "Recreation" and does not support any agricultural operations or farmland. The closest land adjoining the park zoned as agricultural land or used for agricultural purposes from the project site is several miles away. There are adjoining lands, miles away from the project site, that are zoned "Residential" and "Commercial," but in general most of the Park is surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest and designated Wilderness.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT*:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997), prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model for use in assessing impacts on agricultural and farmland.

DISCUSSION

a-c) No land adjoining the project site in any direction is zoned as agricultural land or used for agricultural purposes, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring criteria, as modified for California. Therefore, this project would have no effect on any category of California Farmland, conflict with any existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contract, or result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The project does not convert farmland to any other use. The project restores wetland and stream habitat. No impact.

III. AIR QUALITY.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is situated in central Riverside County at the borders of three distinct Air Basins: the Salton Sea Basin to the south, the Mojave Desert Basin to the north and east, and the South Coast Basin to the west. Moderately high precipitation, regular afternoon winds, and an elevation high above developed areas can result in relatively clean air at the Park. Because of these conditions, activities at the Park typically have no influence on various non-attainment conditions in surrounding Basins, which can include standards for carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, sulfides, ozone, and particulate matter (PM10).

WOULD THE PROJECT*:	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan or regulation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations (e.g., children, the elderly, individuals with compromised respiratory or immune systems)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make these determinations.

DISCUSSION

- a) Work proposed in this project is not in conflict with or would not obstruct implementation of any applicable air quality plan for Riverside County or the surrounding three Air Basins. No impact.

- b-d) The project area is relatively small, and most of the work will be done with hand tools. When heavy equipment is required, the area impacted by heavy equipment will be kept to a minimum. Natural soil conditions throughout much of the worksite are perpetually moist, so dust is not expected to be generated by this project. Some water will be available on-site, for fill compaction, and can also be used for dust abatement if localized dust occurs. On-site burning of small amounts of forest debris (slash), if any, will be done within the terms and conditions of a local Burning Permit, and limited as described below. This activity is not expected to contribute substantially to any air quality violation, nor considerably increase any pollutant, nor subject any individuals to respiratory distress. impact

- e) Excess slash, if any, may be removed by burning in small piles (under the terms and conditions of a local Burning Permit). Since the odor of smoke is uncommon in this Wilderness setting, some visitors may find the odor unexpected and/or objectionable. To ensure this impact does not exceed an insignificant level, burning will only occur during conditions favorable for smoke dispersal away from main public use areas. Alternatively, burning may occur in the evening, when most visitors have left the Park. By limiting burning in such a manner, this impact is expected to be less than significant.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park supports 14 vegetation types as defined in the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) classification, A Manual of California Vegetation. These vegetation types, reproduced from the General Plan, are listed below:

CalVeg	Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf Series	Bauder
Grassland	California annual grassland	Montane vernal lake
Desert (petran) chaparral		
Mixed chaparral	Scrub oak-chaparral; whitethorn Mixed scrub oak; Scrub oak birch- leaf mountain mahogany	
Timberland chaparral	Bush chinquapin; Greenleaf manzanita; Mountain whitethorn	
Canyon live oak	Canyon live oak	
Coulter pine forest	Coulter pine	
Jeffery pine forest	Jeffrey pine	
Mixed conifer forest	Mixed conifer	
Subalpine forest	Lodgepole pine	
	Montane meadow	

Of the various vegetation types represented in the Park, two can be considered significant, the montane vernal lake and the montane meadow habitat. The significance of these areas is twofold; the montane meadow habitat and the montane vernal lake are considered wetlands. Wetlands are particularly vulnerable to human impact as people are drawn to meadows and lakes for water and scenic beauty.

Montane meadow habitat is characterized by a dense growth of sedges and other perennial wetland herbs, generally from 0.5 to 1 meter (1.6 - 3.28 feet) high with some taller herbs reaching up to 2 meters (6.6 feet) tall. Flowering occurs mainly in the summer with plants dormant in the winter, and from fall through spring at higher elevations. Montane meadows are characterized by fine-textured, saturated soils. Distribution of the meadows is scattered throughout the lower montane forests of the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges ranging in elevation from 1,520 to 2,740 meters (about 5,000 to 9,000 feet). This habitat is best represented within Mount San Jacinto State Park at Round Valley, and also occurs in Long Valley.

Mount San Jacinto State Park supports approximately eight sensitive plant taxa (see Table below) which were found during the focused 1999 and 2000 General Plan survey efforts. One is listed as federally threatened and the remaining seven taxa are listed in the California Native Plant Society - Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Sixteen additional sensitive plant species have the potential to occur within the Park. Not all of the potential sensitive species were observed during focused survey efforts but many new locations of sensitive species, such as the shaggy haired alumroot (*Heuchera hirsutissima*)

and lemon lily (*Lilium parryi*), were documented during the 1999-2000 surveys. In addition, cliff cinquefoil (*Potentilla rimicola*) was recorded for the first time since historical occurrences were discovered over fifty years ago. None of the sensitive plant species were found in the vicinity of the project site at lower Round Valley.

Sensitive Plant Taxa Known to Occur within Mount San Jacinto State Park

Taxon	Common Name	Listing Status
<i>Erigeron breweri</i> var. <i>jacinteus</i>	San Jacinto Mountains daisy	CNPS 4
<i>Heuchera hirsutissima</i>	shaggy haired alumroot	CNPS 1B
<i>Linanthus jaegeri</i> [<i>Leptodactylon jaegeri</i>]	San Jacinto prickly phlox	CNPS 1B
<i>Lilium parryi</i>	lemon lily	CNPS 1B
<i>Penstemon clevelandii</i> var. <i>connatus</i>	San Jacinto beard tongue	CNPS 4
<i>Potentilla rimicola</i>	cliff cinquefoil	CNPS 1B
<i>Streptanthus bernardinus</i>	Laguna Mountains jewel-flower	CNPS 1B
<i>Trichostema austromontanum</i> ssp. <i>compactum</i>	Hidden Lake bluecurls	FT/CNPS 1B

The diversity of the plant communities within Mount San Jacinto State Park creates nine different wildlife habitats, as defined by the California Wildlife Habitat Relationship classification system. These are listed below. A tenth wildlife habitat type, Pinyon-Juniper (PJN) woodland, may occur to a limited extent on the north and east facing escarpments.

Wildlife/Vegetation Classification

Wildlife Habitat Classification	Vegetation Classification (CalVeg)
Annual Grassland (AGS)	Grassland
Wet Meadow (WET)	Montane vernal lake
Mixed Chaparral (MCH)	Mixed chaparral and Desert chaparral
Montane Chaparral (MCP)	Timberland chaparral
Montane Hardwood (MHW)	Canyon live oak
Montane Hardwood Conifer (MHC)	Coulter pine forest
Jeffrey Pine (JPN)	Jeffrey pine forest
Sierran Mixed Conifer (SMC)	Mixed conifer forest
Subalpine Conifer (SCN)	Subalpine forest

In addition to the above vegetation-based wildlife habitat classifications, there are also rocky cliff and talus slope habitats in the Park that provide important habitat for species including bats, swallows, birds of prey, and certain reptiles, such as the granite night lizard (*Xantusia henshawi*). Rocky cliff and talus slope habitat is most prevalent in the northern and eastern portions of the Park. Collectively, the Park's variety of habitats have the potential to support a

variety of animal species, including 121 birds, 52 mammals, 22 reptiles, and 7 amphibians. To date, 147 vertebrate species have been confirmed to be present in the Park or use its resources during some portion of the year.

Typical wildlife species observed in the conifer forests of the Park include southern sagebrush lizard, large-blotched ensatina salamander, big brown bat, Merriam's chipmunk, western gray squirrel, coyote, mule deer, and a variety of birds, including mountain quail, Stellar's jay, band-tailed pigeon, white-headed woodpecker, Clark's nutcracker, white-breasted nuthatch, mountain chickadee, fox sparrow, and dark-eyed junco. On the desert escarpments reside species such as the golden eagle, white-throated swift, canyon wren, pocketed free-tailed bat, western mastiff bat, desert spiny lizard, granite night lizard, ring-tailed cat, and peninsular bighorn sheep. In the chaparral and pine-oak woodlands of the western slopes one can find the western fence lizard, gopher snake, southern Pacific rattlesnake, western screech owl, southern spotted owl, acorn woodpecker, northern flicker, scrub jay, Bewick's wren, western blue bird, California myotis bat, California ground squirrel, striped skunk, raccoon, and bobcat.

The composition of animals in Mount San Jacinto State Park reflects the Park's location on the highest and most northerly section of the Peninsular Range. It is generally more similar to that of mountain ranges to the south than to the San Bernardino Mountains of the Transverse Range, only a few miles to the north across the San Gorgonio Pass. However, there are a few species that are more typical of boreal regions to the north. It is believed, by some, that the boreal zone was once more extensive within the State and that following the last ice age the zone contracted towards the north, leaving boreal fauna with habitat only on the highest mountains of southern California. Several boreal species currently reach their most southern distributional limit on Mount San Jacinto, including the State-listed threatened southern rubber boa (*Charina bottae*), the lodgepole chipmunk (*Tamias speciosus*, probably extirpated), and the northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), all of which appear to be declining in abundance in the San Jacinto Mountains, possibly in response to continuing climatic changes.

Of the vertebrate species that occur or could occur within the Park, 52 are on the California Department of Fish and Game's list of Special Animals, which means these species are either officially listed or are of concern to regulatory agencies and Park managers. These species include 2 amphibians, 8 reptiles, 18 mammals, and 21 birds. Those that are officially listed by regulatory agencies and confirmed to be present in the Park at this time are the State-listed threatened southern rubber boa (*Charina bottae*), the federally endangered peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) and the southern California populations of the federally proposed threatened mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana mucosa*). Mount San Jacinto State Park is included within the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CV-MSHCP), which covers several of the aforementioned species, but none of the sensitive species managed for under the CV-MSHCP are known to occur near Round Valley. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) reveals no sensitive animal or plant resources reported directly at Round Valley (Appendix C).

The southern rubber boa generally occurs in moist coniferous forest and woodland habitats at elevations exceeding 5,000 feet. The mountain yellow-legged frog inhabits creeks and streams in ponderosa pine, montane hardwood-conifer, and montane riparian habitats. The

Peninsular bighorn sheep is distributed within the Peninsular Range from the San Jacinto Mountains south into Baja California, Mexico. This large, shy ungulate prefers open areas of low-growing vegetation for browsing, and steep, rugged terrain nearby in which to escape, give birth, and rest. It also requires a reliable water source for drinking. Past surveys for herptofauna in Round Valley have failed to find the rubber boa or mountain yellow-legged frog, thus they are assumed not to be present there.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a sensitive, candidate, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by §404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) No sensitive, special status, or candidate species are known to occur in or adjacent to the project site (Appendix C). The project may have the beneficial effect of enhancing habitat suitable for the mountain yellow-legged frog. Since work will be conducted after surface water has essentially dried-up for the season, and since a qualified biologist will survey the project area for amphibians and other vertebrates daily prior to commencement of work, no adverse impacts are anticipated.
- b) The project will not have a negative effect on any riparian or sensitive community. The restoration of natural hydrology and wetland conditions, a purpose of the project, will enhance these resources. All equipment brought to the worksite will be inspected for cleanliness before transport, to ensure non-native soils and plant materials are not introduced to the native landscape.
- c) A length of existing, unnatural chasm within a wetland area will be filled. The replacement of this chasm with functional, high-value natural wetland conditions (a purpose of the project) at and adjacent to the project site is expected to significantly benefit this resource.
- d) No fish are present in this watershed. The project area is in a seasonal reach of the stream, and there will be no or little surface flow at the time of construction. There will be no impact to permanent reaches of stream downstream. Most trees removed for use as grade control structures, whether living or dead, will be less than 12" in diameter. If any larger trees are desired for these purposes, they will be inspected for wildlife nest or nursery sites or other significant habitat value. Such larger trees will not be used for the project if they provide such sites; alternative trees will be substituted. Furthermore, no wildlife would be expected to be in early ("nursery") life-stages at the time of year the project is scheduled. Thus, no impact is expected.
- e) The project is consistent with the Mount San Jacinto State Park General Plan, but will require an exception to the general prohibition against use of motorized equipment in State Wilderness. However, the timing of project construction has been scheduled so that only a relative few Park visitors are likely to witness this disturbance, and site conditions will be restored to a natural appearance at the conclusion of the project. The interpretive signs placed following project completion will inform Wilderness users of the need for the restoration, and include an explanation of the need for the extraordinary exception to the general motorized equipment prohibition. Interpretive information about the purpose, need, and justification for the project will also be distributed at the trailhead (pamphlet and/or sign) as described in Mitigation Measure NOISE-2 (see Section XI, below). Thus, this impact is expected to be less than significant.
- f) This project would not conflict with the provisions of any Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan. Mount San Jacinto State Park is included within the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, but none of the sensitive species managed for under the CV-MSHCP are known to occur near Round Valley.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is within the ethnographic territory of the Cahuilla Indians, whose ancestors entered this region of southern California approximately 3,000 years ago. Ethnographers and linguists have divided the Cahuilla into three groups: the Mountain Cahuilla, the Desert Cahuilla, and the Western or Pass Cahuilla. The Cahuilla range once covered much of Riverside County and parts of San Bernardino, San Diego, and Imperial Counties. This territory was bordered on the north by the Serrano and the Chemehuevi, on the east by the Chemehuevi and Quechan (Yuma), on the south by the Kumeyaay (also called Diegueño, Ipai, Tipai, and Kamia), and on the west by the Gabrielino, Luiseño (Juaneño), and Cupeño.

The prehistoric Cahuilla were hunters and gatherers who lived in permanent villages and seasonally traveled into other portions of their territory to take advantage of various resources. The high mountain region that includes San Jacinto Peak was primarily used for hunting deer and gathering various plants. There are also places in the mountains that the Cahuilla (and other southern California tribes) consider to be sacred, including certain mountain peaks, springs, rock outcroppings, and other natural formations.

European contact with the Cahuilla came in 1774 when the Juan Bautista de Anza expedition passed through their territory. The Cahuilla were probably already aware of the Europeans and had most likely, been affected by European diseases through other American Indian groups. Some of the Cahuilla were baptized at Spanish missions in San Gabriel, San Luis Rey, and San Diego, and by 1819 several *asistencias* (San Bernardino, Santa Ysabel, and Pala) had been established near Cahuilla territory. The Cahuilla began to adopt some of the Spanish culture including cattle operations, intensive agriculture, wage labor, clothing, language, and religion, but they managed to maintain their political and economic autonomy until the establishment of the reservations, between 1877 and 1891, forced their relocation and took away many of their freedoms.

There have been 42 prehistoric and historic sites and isolated finds recorded within Mount San Jacinto State Park; however, only about five percent of the Park has been surveyed for cultural resources. Detailed descriptions and locational information for the recorded sites are found in the Mount San Jacinto State Park Resources Inventory and other California State Parks files. For the purposes of environmental review for this project, confidential maps compiled for the 2002 General Plan were reviewed.

Native American sites located within the Park include bedrock mortars, basins, and slicks; rock shelters; lithic chipping waste scatters; and portable groundstone implements. Thirteen of these sites and isolated finds are located on the western side of the Park at lower elevations. Seven sites are located on the eastern side of the Park at elevations ranging from 8,390 to 9,040 feet. Although ethnographic accounts seem to indicate that the Cahuilla mainly used the higher elevations for hunting, the presence of grinding implements (including bedrock slicks and basins, and portable metates) indicates that some sort of processing was also occurring at

these higher elevations. Six of these prehistoric sites also include historic components and are included in the counts for both prehistoric and historic sites.

Acquired in February 1933, during the height of the Great Depression, Mount San Jacinto State Park was the culmination of over forty years of private and public attempts to preserve the San Jacinto Mountain wilderness from uncontrolled exploitation by lumber, game hunting and tourist interests. Through the cooperative efforts of California State Parks, the Federal government, and local officials, as well as concerned citizens, almost all of the San Jacinto high country was protected as wilderness. The oldest State Wilderness administered by California State Parks, it was dedicated on June 19, 1937. Some of the park's earliest improvements dating from this time include a number of surviving trails, bridges, campgrounds, wilderness shelters, and administration buildings. Designed by National Park Service (NPS) specialists and built by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) construction crews, they made it possible for California State Parks to administer one of the State's most dramatic wilderness areas. Many of these surviving Depression-era facilities continue to serve the park today, serving as historic links to a facility development program that not only improved the Park's accessibility, but, more importantly, provided jobs and hope throughout California during one of the greatest economic crises in the nation's history. Like those found in other state, local, and national Parks, these resources have been recognized through California State Parks' thematic studies as historically significant.

While the Depression-era resources are of primary historical significance, there are other buildings and structures that represent the Park's continued development and improvement in response to the demands placed by increased use after World War II. In addition, the Park contains historical sites and artifacts that are linked to a period of time when the area was exploited by pioneer lumbering operations, livestock raising, as well as health improvement and tourist operations.

There are 19 historic archaeological sites and isolated finds that have been recorded within the Park. These include trash dumps, historic camp remains, structure remains, rock shelters, and isolated artifacts. The trash dumps range from small can dumps to large refuse deposits dating from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s. Of the six historic camp remains, only three have been associated with specific activities: one to the CCC era, and the other two to historic logging. Two rock shelters that have been recorded may have been used both prehistorically and historically, but there are no specific indications of dates of use.

The majority of the Park's historical resources are associated with the work of the CCC during the 1930s. Administered by NPS staff and reserve military personnel, the historic resources that the CCC constructed in Mount San Jacinto State Park are part of the more than 1,500 buildings and structures that they erected within the California State Park System.

Among the historic resources directly associated with the CCC's work in the Park is the "Park Rustic" architecture of the Round Valley Ranger Station and the Peak Shelter. The Round Valley Ranger Station is a cabin made of upright dressed logs and fieldstone rubble. The Peak Shelter is a small, one-story cabin-like shelter. Its walls are composed of rough courses of cut and dressed granite rock gathered from the surrounding area. The Campground and

Administrative Center at Idyllwild are also of CCC construction. Other historic archaeological resources that exist which may be associated with the CCC-era include: the remains of a small dam made out of native rock and cement, white and brown ceramic insulators and phone lines tied into pine trees, and a small bench made out of native rock and cement with “Hope Seat” etched into the cement.

A potentially historic resource along the upper portion of the Park’s eastern escarpment is an approximately two-mile section of the controversial Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. At the time of its completion in 1963, the tramway was the longest single-lift overhead suspension tramway in the world. It rises 6,300 feet from the tramway’s Palm Spring base to the Mountain Station. The steel towers and overhead cables are key character-defining features of one of the longest passenger aerial tramways in the world. While only 38 years old, the tramway has already established a place for itself in American history and engineering as an important example of the type of engineering and construction practices used during the early 1960s. It is also associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our collective history: the 37-year struggle between the tramway’s supporters and opponents.

In addition to constructing buildings, the CCC crews spent a great deal of their time improving campground facilities and trails throughout the Park. Combined with the historic Park-Rustic style buildings and native geological and plant features, these stone, wood, and concrete structures combine to form Cultural Landscapes. Consciously designed either by a landscape professional according to design principles or by amateurs following a recognized style or tradition, Mount San Jacinto’s CCC-era cultural landscapes also qualify as Historic Designed Landscapes. Adapting the design to complement the site’s natural features creates unique spatial arrangements. Examples are the grouping of heavy stone entry piers, a massive stone and concrete vehicle bridge, as well as stone “Diablo” stoves, benches, retaining walls, culverts, parking space delineators, and wood fences at the Idyllwild Campground and Administrative Center.

The concept of a Historic Designed Landscape can also be seen along the approximately 36 miles of improved trails that are still used today by Park visitors and staff to travel up to higher elevations. From temporary camps at Idyllwild, Tahquitz Meadow, and Round Valley, CCC crews improved the Wellman’s Cienega and the Deer Springs trails and repaired other existing trails. They also constructed the San Jacinto Peak Trail to the peak shelter. While the trails have experienced modifications and the addition of connecting trails to accommodate the Pacific Crest Trail, for the most part, the original trail system, as well as the associated CCC-built buildings and other structures, have retained their historic integrity.

Predating the historic CCC-era historic landscapes are cultural landscapes associated with the area’s lumber industry. One large site consists of the remains of a historic sawmill and nearby workers’ camp. The site includes foundation pads, debris fields, and trash pits.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The Round Valley Ranger Station is one of a limited number of Civilian Conservation Corps-era structures and features remaining in the Park. However, the zone of sensitivity associated with this feature is limited to the western side of Round Valley, and no known historic resources have been identified on the eastern end of Round Valley (project site). Thus, the project is expected to have no impact on historic resources.
- b) Archeological resources occur in the Park, but previous surveys in and around Round Valley have identified no archeological resources there or within the project construction zone. Thus, the project is expected to have no impact on archeological resources.
- c) No human remains or burial sites have been documented at the Park. Though past cultural resource surveys have included Round Valley and the vicinity of the proposed project site, there is always some uncertainty about what may be uncovered when extensive excavation and earthwork is undertaken. However, no impact is anticipated because the average depth of excavation throughout the borrow area is only about one foot. In any case, excavation work would cease, and a qualified State Park Archaeologist summoned to investigate, if State Park staff (onsite at all times during construction) observe uncovering of anything other than native soil matter during excavation activities.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The San Jacinto Mountains show evidence of tens of millions of years of geologic activity. These periods include deposition of sediment (Paleozoic or older), granitic intrusion (Jura-Cretaceous) and uplift and faulting (Pleistocene and recent). Earthquake activity during the early 1900s, and geological proximity to the San Andreas Fault, would suggest that this region is active.

The bulk of Mount San Jacinto State Park is made up of granitic rock. The outcropping within Mount San Jacinto State Park is a representation of the larger geologic formation known as the California Batholith, which was formed 120 – 90 million years ago in the mid-Cretaceous Period.

The soils and soil profiles within Mount San Jacinto State Park were identified in a soil survey of the San Bernardino National Forest Area, completed by United States Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Service. The soils within Mount San Jacinto State Park consist of shallow to moderately deep and somewhat excessively-drained soils that formed in material from weathered granite. The permeability of the soil ranges from rapid to very rapid and the erosion hazard ranges from moderate to very high.

WOULD THE PROJECT:	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area, or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable, as a result of the project and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1997), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems, where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project site is not in an area prone to landslide. Any risk of seismicity at Mount San Jacinto State Park is not expected to affect the project, as no structures other than log weirs and low fencing will be constructed. No impact.
- b) The purpose of the proposed work is to restore the natural hydrology and topography of the area, to the greatest extent practicable. A temporary increase in erosion may occur at some locations because fill is exposed as part of the restoration, but the loss should not be substantial. Some compaction of topsoil may occur along the route followed by the backhoe-loader(s), but this will likely be limited in area as well as severity because the

equipment will be relatively small models, rubber-tired, and will follow only one or two routes between the borrow areas and the fill site. Compacted areas will be scarified and mulched at project completion, as described in Mitigation Measure GEO-1 below. Topography would change from the existing disturbed condition; imprudent grading, excavation, or fill placement during the restoration could initially affect natural topography. Minor side-casting of fill soil may bury some undisturbed topsoil adjacent to the existing chasm; this impact is limited by the comparatively larger area of restored meadow and topsoil overlay. Overall, the work would diminish erosion and, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 below, any contribution to substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil by the proposed project would be reduced to a less than significant level.

<p>MITIGATION MEASURES GEO-1</p> <p>The filled chasm and elevated thalweg would be compacted in layers to prevent loose material from sloughing off, then smoothed and raked to provide uniform drainage and prevent concentration of flow. Bare ground would be mulched and thatched to minimize surface erosion, also using vegetation plugs removed during the work whenever possible. Any ground areas that suffer an inordinate amount of compaction from concentrated equipment traffic will be scarified with hand tools, prior to mulching and revegetation.</p>

<p>MITIGATION MEASURES GEO-2</p> <p>Work will be conducted during the dry season when streamflow is minimal or non-existent. Other Best Management Practices (BMPs) prescribed by the California Department of Fish and Game (1602 Agreement) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (CWA 401 Certification or Waiver) will be implemented and will reduce any impacts from erosion to less than significant. A Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Action Plan, submitted as a condition of the Water Quality Certification, ensures continuing compliance with these erosion control and restoration objectives.</p>

- c) The project is located within a meadow, where soil can be subject to disturbance if protective vegetation is removed. However, the goal of the project is to repair damage from headcutting and eliminate nick-points, stabilize the streambanks, and reduce the potential for lateral erosion and gulying. Project benefit, negligible impact.
- d) Expansive soils do not exist in the project area. The project does not include construction of significant structures. No impact.
- e) No septic tanks or waste disposal systems would be constructed or impacted by this project. No impact.
- f) There are no known unique paleontological resources or sites, or unique geologic features, in the project area. No impact.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is relatively free of hazardous materials. The main such material used and stored in and adjacent to the Wilderness area of the Park are small quantities of motor fuel, primarily at the upper Palm Springs Aerial Tramway station. Fuel is typically not transported through the Wilderness other than within individuals' backpacks and portable stoves when camping.

Hazards in Mount San Jacinto State Park are similar to any outdoor setting and include steep slopes, rushing water, wild animals, disease carrying insects, and inclement weather. In addition, the Park is in a remote portion of Riverside County and emergency transport to the nearest hospital would require up to a several-hour response time in some locations. No airstrips exist within the park or immediately adjacent to park property; the Palm Springs airport is about 10 miles away.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, substances, or waste into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites, compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5, and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be located in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires, including areas where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) Fuel and related materials necessary for the operation and maintenance of construction tools and equipment are the only hazardous materials that will be transported to the project site. Diesel fuel will be delivered in commercially-sealed barrels in one trip at the beginning of the project, by helicopter airlift, and any unused fuel will be removed the same way after project completion. Properly-sealed containers of smaller quantities gas and oil and cleaners for power tools will also be delivered and stored by the same method. Project-site storage of fuel will be limited to one staging area, and an adjacent section of trail will be detoured during construction, so no impact to the public is anticipated.

- b) Construction activities would require the use of certain potentially environmentally-hazardous materials, such as fuels, oils, and solvents. These materials are generally used for excavation equipment, chain saws, generators, and other construction equipment and would be contained within vessels engineered for safe storage. Large quantities of these materials would not be stored at the construction site. Spills, upsets, equipment failure, or other construction-related accidents could result in a release of fuel or other hazardous substances into the environment. The following mitigation measure would reduce the potential for adverse impacts from these incidents to a less than significant level.

MITIGATION MEASURE HAZMAT-1

- All equipment would be inspected for leaks before arrival at the project site, again immediately prior to the start of construction, and regularly inspected thereafter until equipment is removed from the project site.
- Equipment would be brought to the site in clean condition, and cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside the project area at an existing Park maintenance yard. Contaminated fluids or materials, if any, would be disposed of outside Park boundaries at a lawfully-permitted or authorized destination.

- c) The project is not located within one-quarter mile of any school and no schools are proposed for this area. No impact.
- d) Mount San Jacinto State Park is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5. Therefore, no impact would occur with project development.
- e-f) The project sites are not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport, or in the vicinity of a private air strip. Therefore, no impact would occur as a result of this project.
- g) All construction activities associated with the project would occur within the boundaries of Mount San Jacinto State Wilderness and work would not restrict access to or block any public road. Emergency response requirements, generally reliant upon foot-travel, would be no greater in the presence of the project. No impact.
- h) The project site is located in a meadow area, containing generally moist soils and a high percentage of wetland vegetation that does not present a high fire risk. Although most of Mount San Jacinto State Park and the surrounding area is dominated by montane forest and other vegetation that becomes highly flammable during the dry season (June-October), the construction equipment associated with this project would not be operating within high-fuel areas associated with this potential fire hazard. However, as an additional safety measure, power equipment (such as chain saws and generators) will have functioning spark arrestors. The project would not add any new uses that could create additional fire risks. Therefore, the impact of this project would be less than significant.

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is an “island” surrounded by desert and intensely urban developed areas. Within the Park, the sensitive wetlands resources are “islands within the island,” many plant and wildlife resources depend directly on these relatively uncommon, limited-size, easily-disturbed habitats. An example of this “island within an island” concept is the Long Valley Meadow and Round Valley Meadow. These areas are at different elevations within the same 4,000-acre watershed, with runoff from snowpack melting and infiltrating into the permeable soils, and feeding springs at the lower elevations. Each of these areas have distinct natural features and characteristics, which all depend on the localized and surrounding hydrologic resources.

There is one lake in the Park, Hidden Lake, a "montane vernal lake" occupying a shallow basin in the eastern edge of the Wilderness. Hidden Lake is underlain by an impermeable layer of granitic rocks, which promotes prolonged water retention, and is surrounded by slopes and steep escarpments. The area of Hidden Lake varies in area from several acres to less than 1 acre, depending on the amount of precipitation and runoff in a given year, though it has been known to dry entirely in some years. Hidden Lake, at approximately 8,694 feet in elevation, is the only natural montane vernal lake in Riverside County.

Major springs in the Park include Deer Springs, Wellman's Cienega, Round Valley Meadow, Little Round Valley Meadow, Strawberry Cienega, and Long Valley Meadow. The watersheds and runoff flow into drainage channels such as Snow Creek, Fall Creek, Chino Creek, and Tamarack Creek. On the west side, runoff flows towards the North Fork of the San Jacinto River, Fuller Mill Creek, and Strawberry Creek.

Water quality in Mount San Jacinto State Park is generally very clear and free of any pollutants in streams. The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board regulates water quality in the Park. Groundwater in the park is free of pollutants and considered very high quality because very few potential pollution sources exist. The groundwater table fluctuates annually, depending on rainfall and seasonal temperatures and varies throughout the area because of the influences of geology and topography.

Round Valley's drainage stream, the site of the proposed project, is typically a seasonal stream whose duration varies depending on water-year precipitation conditions. A permanent spring at the head of Round Valley has been improved with a pipe that makes it convenient for hikers and campers to get untreated water, but the flow of this spring normally quickly percolates into the nearby sandy soil. Other springs and runoff in the meadow flow overland in numerous channels that meander and alternately disperse and coalesce. Round Valley Meadow also probably serves to recharge the aquifer that supplies more permanent flow to lower reaches of Long Valley Creek; storage in these meadow soils may have a relationship to the production of downstream springs. There are no public water systems in the area impacted by the proposed project.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map, or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place structures that would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from flooding, including flooding resulting from the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project would be in compliance with all applicable water quality standards and waste discharge requirements (see Mitigation Measure HAZMAT-1 regarding potential impacts from accidents, spills, or upset). The project would result in a net decrease in non-point source pollution. Additionally, all work would be accomplished during late summer and early fall, when the intermittent stream is dry or nearly dry, further lessening any chance of impact to surface water quality. The project scope does not include waste discharge work of any kind. Project location, design, and timing, in combination with the Hazmat mitigation measure indicated above for accidental hazardous material exposure, would result in a less than significant impact to water quality and waste discharge.
- b) The project would not deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. Groundwater quantity may be influenced by changes in surface drainage patterns and/or changes in porosity of earth materials at fill sites. Increasing surface flows in certain locations through reconnection of channels would alter existing groundwater conditions at both the reconnected and the abandoned channel site. Newly restored fills would experience a period of interactive adjustment to groundwater flows as the fills consolidate over time; however, in the long term, both the fill and groundwater flows would evolve toward their pre-disturbance patterns. Fills will be compacted during their placement to speed this process of consolidation. Changes in the direction or rate of groundwater flow may be influenced by changes in surface drainage patterns. Substantial short-term reductions in the amount of groundwater or surface water available for public water supplies would not occur as a result of the project; the amount of local groundwater would eventually increase, due to the anticipated higher water table in the Round Valley Meadow. The impact of the project on groundwater supplies would be less than significant.
- c) Existing (altered) drainage patterns would be restored to pre-disturbance patterns. Reconnecting diverted streams segments to their natural flow pattern could increase discharge in abandoned channels. However, significant geomorphic adjustments are not likely to occur due to the increased discharge because the reoccupied channels had originally formed under the expected post-treatment flow regime. Effects of reestablishing pre-disturbance drainage patterns and discharge have been evaluated to ensure increased discharge would not adversely impact fluvial geomorphic functioning at the site or downstream. The Best Management Practices described in Mitigations Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 would reduce the potential for adverse impacts to a less than significant level; on-site erosion and siltation would be short term and less than the existing conditions that are being remedied.
- d) The project is designed to reduce the severity of peak runoff events, and combined with completion of the work during the dry season, would reduce the possibility of project-related flooding on- or off-site. The work would significantly restore the creek's access to its natural and historic floodplain, reducing erosive velocities and allowing stormwater to percolate into the soil. The work would eliminate unnatural concentrations of flow in the entrenched channel, thereby reducing peak runoff events and streambank erosion. Runoff

would be more evenly distributed across the landscape in restored natural flow paths. Flood stages will be reduced although minor flood frequency may increase; the impact of minor modification of the flood regime is not expected to be significant on- or off-site.

- e) The project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems, or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. No stormwater systems exist downslope from the project. No adverse impact.
- f) The project, in and of itself, reduces soil erosion and sediment inputs to streams, thereby improving water quality once construction is complete. However, there is the potential for short-term sedimentation and the accidental spillage of toxic substances (e.g., diesel fuel and hydraulic oil) during the construction process. The Best Management Practices described in Mitigation Measures HAZMAT-1, GEO-1, and GEO-2 would reduce the potential for adverse impacts to a less than significant level.
- g,h) The project does not involve housing or construction of any structure designed for human occupation. No impact.
- i) The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from flooding, including flooding resulting from the failure of a levee or dam. No adverse impact.
- j) Mount San Jacinto State Park is not in an area subject to any risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. No impact.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The majority of the Park is bordered by the San Bernardino National Forest, most of which is designated as National Wilderness. On the west side, the communities of Idyllwild and Pine Cove are situated close to the Park boundaries. These two mountain villages support quaint cabins, inns, shops, and restaurants. Between these two villages along Highway 243, the County of Riverside operates the County Nature Center and a campground facility. On the east side, adjacent to the Park’s steep escarpments facing the desert floor, are square parcels of undeveloped land owned by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

The project is located in Mount San Jacinto State Park and is under the planning guidelines of the 2002 General Plan. The Plan presents the goals and guidelines that apply Park-wide for resource management and facility planning for public access, recreation, interpretation, resource protection, and park administration in a setting where many resources are rare and sensitive.

The proposed project is consistent with the "Hydrology" Section of the General Plan, specifically a Guideline which states, "Protect, enhance, and restore the Park’s wetlands and hydrologic resources." This project implements a Goal of the General Plan to implement "strategies for stabilization and topographic restoration of severely eroded features and areas."

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with the applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project would not physically divide an established community because no community exists within or adjacent to the State Wilderness. The nearest communities, Palm Springs and Idyllwild, are several miles away. No impact.
- b) This project is essentially a Goal of, and is consistent with, the Mount San Jacinto State Park General Plan. It will not conflict with any other regional or other plan. No impact.
- c) The project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Mount San Jacinto State Park is included within the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, but none of the sensitive species managed for under the CV-MSHCP are known to occur near Round Valley. No impact.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

No significant mineral resources have been identified within the boundaries of Mount San Jacinto State Park. Mineral resource extraction is not permitted under the Resource Management Directives of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that is or would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource because no known mineral resources exist within the park. No impact.
- b) The project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site because none exist within the park. No impact.

XI. NOISE.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is located in forested, rugged terrain in Southern California. Dominated by Wilderness, much of the park is literally a refuge from noise. The only usual, expected exceptions are the occasional voices of visitors and occasional air traffic. The latter can be both private and commercial, usually associated with the Palm Springs airport about 10 miles away.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Generate or expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in a local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generate or expose people to excessive groundborne vibrations or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project (above levels without the project)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project, in excess of noise levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) Construction noise levels at and near the project area would fluctuate, depending on the type and number of construction equipment and tools operating at any given time. However, even short-term increases in ambient noise levels could disturb visitors nearing the project site and disrupt the ambience of the Wilderness and nearby campsites. For this reason, project construction is scheduled for as short a period as possible (less than 30 days total) as the Park's peak use season is waning and preferably during a period when the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is inoperable and Park attendance will be negligible. The early-morning helicopter airlifts will avoid the presence of almost all visitors, as the Tramway normally doesn't open to the public until 10 a.m. Implementation of the following Mitigation Measures will further reduce the adverse impacts to a less than significant level.

MITIGATION MEASURE NOISE-1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction activities would be limited to the hours between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (except for the two days when helicopter airlifts will likely occur 1-2 hours earlier than this timeframe).• Internal combustion engines used for any purpose at the job site would be equipped with a muffler of a type prescribed by the manufacturer.

MITIGATION MEASURE NOISE-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpretive material (trailhead sign and/or pamphlet) will be developed expressly for Wilderness visitors during this time, alerting them to the unusual, one-time construction activity and informing them of the benefits of the proposed project to sensitive Wilderness resources.

- b) The project would not generate or expose people to excessive groundborne vibrations or groundborne noise levels because only relatively-small pieces of equipment will be used in this project. The sizes of the machines and equipment used do not generate excessive vibrations. No impact.
- c) Project-related noise would only occur during actual construction. Once construction is completed, all noise-generating equipment will be removed from the site. The project would not create any source that would contribute to a any increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project. No impact.
- d) See Discussion XI(a) above. Campsites immediately adjacent to the project would be occupied by CCC workers during construction; otherwise, construction activities are limited to daytime hours. Implementation of the mitigations indicated in Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 would reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level.
- e,f) The project is not within an airport land use plan and is not within 2 miles of an airport; therefore, the project would have no impact.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area including the upper the meadow's seasonal stream watershed, located in Mount San Jacinto State Park, is two miles away from a residential unit that is occasionally occupied by State Park employees. No other housing exists within or adjacent to the Wilderness, and no housing developments are planned. The communities surrounding the park are expansive urban areas and rural subdivisions, but are at least 5 miles away. Tourism does result in temporary seasonal fluctuations in the population of these areas, but the project would not contribute to these variations.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

a,b,c) The project would not induce substantial population growth because the project does not involve housing or new businesses. The project involves restoring a creek and a meadow within a State Wilderness and is not anticipated to discernibly affect public visitation or adjacent campsite use, much less have any direct or indirect effect on population growth. The project would not require hiring additional employees, so no replacement housing would be required, because all workers already maintain housing in the region or provide their own temporary facilities. No people would be displaced because the project only involves temporary detour of a trail that has no access or use by residences. CCC Crew use of 3-4 campsites in the work area will not affect campers because the Park's campsites typically do not fill during the months scheduled for project construction. All work would take place within the confines of the Park boundaries, with no additions or changes to the existing local infrastructure. Therefore, the project would have no impact on population growth or housing requirements in the area.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area including the upper the meadow's seasonal stream watershed is a gently-sloping to nearly flat area seasonally-popular with tourists. It is completely within the boundaries of Mount San Jacinto State Park. Trails provide moderately-difficult access to these locations for recreation, project work, or in an emergency.

Daily law enforcement and public safety services are provided year round by California State Park Rangers who provide primary patrol in developed and public use areas. Mutual aid coordination occurs with other local law enforcement agencies that have jurisdiction and maintain regular presence in the area (mainly the Riverside County Sheriff, Palm Springs Police Department, and California Highway Patrol).

CDF and USFS provide fire protection for the area and maintain fire stations in Riverside County. The USFS Air Attack base is located in San Bernardino, approximately 20 air-miles from Mount San Jacinto. Because of the roadless character of the Wilderness, fire suppression in the Park is essentially limited to hand-crews (by foot) and attack by aircraft.

No schools exist within the project area; and the nearest school is about 3 miles away from the work sites.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Result in significant environmental impacts from construction associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) As noted in the Environmental Setting above, daily law enforcement and public safety services are provided year-round by California State Park Rangers assigned to Mount San Jacinto State Park, with primary patrols in public use areas. State Park Rangers have full law enforcement authority and only require assistance from other agencies as backup for unusual situations. No additional demands on Rangers or local law enforcement staff are expected as a result of this project.

No schools exist within or near the project area. No changes would occur that would affect existing schools or require additional schools or school personnel. No impact.

No adverse impact would occur at Mount San Jacinto State Park or any other public facilities as a result of this project. The project would improve Mount San Jacinto State Park by protecting the natural resources of the Park. The project would improve the aesthetic quality of a popular Wilderness area, improve visitor safety, reduce sediment sources, and encourage natural revegetation. Since no public use areas would be permanently closed nor access significantly limited as a result of this project, no other parks in the area should show a related increase in use. Requirements for maintenance of the restored stream channel are expected to require no more than the routine hand-labor occasionally used for trail maintenance, and this additional workload is expected to be less than significant.

The project would have no impact on fire protection. The project, as a whole, would have a less than significant effect on any public services.

XIV. RECREATION.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is one of the most visited units of the California State Park System, usually logging over 375,000 visitor-days each year. Visitor activities include sightseeing, hiking, camping, birding, and other forms of nature study. Also, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are pursued in the winter.

Even in light of this visitation, Mount San Jacinto State Park has a limited number of developed facilities that are concentrated mainly in the most westerly and easterly sections of the Park. On the west side, near the town of Idyllwild, are the Idyllwild Ranger Station, a maintenance building, and two Park staff residences. Adjacent to the Ranger Station is the Idyllwild Campground consisting of thirty-three developed sites including two with recreational vehicle hook-ups, two restrooms, showers, and a campfire center. Six miles north of the Idyllwild Ranger Station along Highway 243 is the Stone Creek Campground. This campground has fifty developed sites and three restrooms.

On the east side of the Park, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway provides access into the Park. The Mountain Station and the upper two-thirds of the tram route lie within the Park. Within the Mountain Station are food services, a gift shop, conference rooms, restrooms, viewing decks, and an interpretive audio/video area. State Park volunteers, under the guidance of California State Parks, operate an information center located in the Mountain Station. North of the station is the Winter Park Authority's potable water storage tank that supplies the water for both the station and two potable water tanks located within Long Valley. Potable water is transported to WPA's water tank by the Tram cars.

A Ranger Station and a minor maintenance building are located in Long Valley. WPA facilities within the valley included an abandoned mule ride operation with a staging area and corrals, and an Adventure Center that offers snow-oriented equipment rentals. The WPA also operates a downhill snow-tubing/sledding area adjacent to the Adventure Center. Two potable water storage tanks, one fire-fighting water storage tank, and several leach fields are located in the valley. Water for the fire-fighting tank is taken from Long Valley Creek.

Within the wilderness, there is a total of 49 primitive campsites located at four locations: Round Valley (Appendix A), Tamarack Valley, Little Round Valley, and Strawberry Junction.

A few historic facilities built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), which remain in use by Park staff, are located within the Park. These CCC-constructed facilities include the Ranger Station at Round Valley, the maintenance shop and Residence #1 at Idyllwild Campground, the Peak Shelter, and amenities such as Diablo stoves and trail rockwork and cribbing.

The project site is located within the 9,900-acre State Wilderness. Visitation of this area is on the order of 20,000 visitors per year. The campsites that surround Round Valley Meadow usually only fill to capacity on Friday and Saturday nights between Memorial Day and Labor Day (plus an additional night on holiday weekends).

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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WOULD THE PROJECT:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

DISCUSSION

- a) The project may slightly increase day use of the rehabilitated areas of the meadow and creek, once construction is completed, primarily because of its value for interpretive programs. However, the overall increase would be minimal and would not accelerate the deterioration of any facility. No impact to other neighboring areas or parks is expected.
- b) The project does not include or influence the construction of recreational facilities or the expansion of any facility; therefore, no impact would occur.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

As stated earlier, Mount San Jacinto State Park is predominantly roadless Wilderness. Idyllwild and Pine Cove are situated close to the western Park boundaries and are connected by Highway 243.

On the eastern side of the Park, Tramway Drive leaves the northwestern edge of the City of Palm Springs and climbs steeply over 4 miles to the lower Palm Springs Aerial Tramway station. The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is partially located within Mount San Jacinto State Park. The tramway takes the visitor from the desert floor (2,643-foot elevation at lower tramway station which lies outside the State Park) into Mount San Jacinto State Park (8,516-foot elevation at the Mountain Station) in a matter of minutes. During the ride, the rotating tramway cars offer the visitor panoramic views of Palm Springs and the surrounding area, including the majestic mountain ranges of the Park and varied plant communities.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Cause a substantial increase in traffic, in relation to existing traffic and the capacity of the street system (i.e., a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, individually or cumulatively, the level of service standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Cause a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Contain a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or a dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment) that would substantially increase hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The project is many miles from the nearest road, and no new permanent or recurring-seasonal staff or crews will be added for this project. This would result in no impact on existing traffic nor the capacity of the existing (regional) highway and road system.
- b) The project would not cause traffic levels to exceed, individually or cumulatively, the level of service standards for designated roads or highways because no traffic increase is anticipated. No impact.
- c) The project sites are not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport, in the vicinity of a private air strip, and do not serve as a normal reporting point for air traffic in the area. Nothing in the proposed project would in any way affect or change existing air traffic patterns; therefore, no impact would occur as a result of this project.
- d) The project does not contain a design feature nor generate incompatible uses that would substantially increase traffic hazards, because the project does not contain elements influencing the design or use of any road. No impact.
- e) The project would not result in inadequate emergency access because any emergency staff will continue to have access to the trail sections within the restoration zone. There will be no disruption to normal emergency access to any portion of the Park. No impact.
- f) The project would not result in inadequate parking capacity because the parking areas at the lower Palm Springs Aerial Tramway station does not fill to capacity during the months scheduled for project construction. Park staff and construction workers will park in service areas or in closed areas at that staging site. Adequate parking exists in the other nearby parking areas that will not be altered or used by construction crews. No impact.
- g) The project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation because it does not reduce or increase transportation uses. No impact.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mount San Jacinto State Park is serviced by several public utilities but provides its own water supply and wastewater disposal system. Surface water is supplied to the project area by precipitation, runoff during storm events, and snowmelt; potable water from WPA's wells at the lower Palm Springs Aerial Tramway station is conveyed to the upper Aerial Tramway station by tanks in the Tram cars and stored in WPA's Long Valley tank. A wastewater leach field is maintained in Long Valley.

Electricity for the developed areas of the Park is provided by Southern California Edison, commercial telecommunications are provided by SBC, and propane gas is conveyed in small portable cylinders. Commercial propane delivery to domestic tanks occurs in the western developed areas of the Park. A local waste management company provides solid waste disposal services from the lower Tramway station and from the Idyllwild-area facilities.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment restrictions or standards of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination, by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project, that it has adequate capacity to service the project's anticipated demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations as they relate to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a-b)No wastewater would be produced by this project. No impact.
- c) The project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities. No impact.
- d) An existing spring at the head of Round Valley will be tapped (by garden hose) to convey water to the project site (about 1,400 feet away). A turnout or sufficient bypass will be allowed at the spring to provide uninterrupted water supply for Park visitors (trail users). No other outside source of water is required during or after construction. The impact to the Round Valley spring will be short-term and will not be significant.
- e-g)No impact; no wastewater or solid waste would be generated by this project.

CHAPTER 4 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
WOULD THE PROJECT:				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probably future projects?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on humans, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION

- a) The proposed project is expected to improve the quality of the environment by restoring high-value functioning wetland, substantially increasing the habitat for several wildlife and wetland plant species. Some mortality of upland plant species, including some meadowside trees, may be succeeded by slight expansion of the meadow habitat and is considered a less than significant environmental impact.
- b) The proposed project has been evaluated for potential significant impacts to cultural resources. The project site is not in an area containing historic or prehistoric resources and will not impact examples of California history or prehistory. No impact is anticipated.
- c) Mount San Jacinto State Park periodically conducts other maintenance programs and rehabilitation projects, as well as routine, ongoing maintenance; these general maintenance activities will continue in the foreseeable future. However, the proposed project is completely unrelated to other routine projects, and is several miles distant from most regular Park activity. At this isolated Wilderness project site, and at developed Park areas, no cumulative impacts are anticipated.

- d) Project-related environmental effects have been determined to pose a less than significant impact on humans. However, possible impacts from construction accidents (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) and Noise, though temporary in nature, have the potential to result in adverse effects on humans. Most significant are the impacts created by noise and other disturbance from the use of mechanized equipment in State Wilderness, but these adverse impacts are expected to be less than significant because of the full implementation of all mitigation measures incorporated into this project.

Furthermore, the conditions necessary to authorize use of mechanized equipment in State Wilderness for the purposes of resource management, as prescribed by Department Operations Manual Section 0304.5.4, are met by this project:

1) Reasonable alternatives to the use of mechanized equipment, for the purpose of excavating, moving, and compacting 700 to 900 yards of soil over a distance of several hundred feet, within a reasonable timeframe, do not exist;

2) A significant resource management need exists, being the inevitable major future erosional damage predicted to occur in Round Valley, and the result of the work will be substantially unnoticed (owing to topographic restoration of natural-appearing grade, and revegetation);

3) The use of this mechanized equipment will be non-recurring, and is limited in time and area to the minimum necessary; and

4) The District Superintendent will provide prior written approval, assuring that the above requirements are met.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures would be implemented by DPR as part of the Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration Project.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

MITIGATION MEASURE GEO-1

- The filled chasm and elevated talweg would be compacted in layers to prevent loose material from sloughing off, then smoothed and raked to provide uniform drainage and prevent concentration of flow. Bare ground would be mulched and thatched to minimize surface erosion, also using vegetation plugs removed during the work whenever possible. Any ground areas that suffer an inordinate amount of compaction from concentrated equipment traffic will be scarified with hand tools, prior to mulching and revegetation.

MITIGATION MEASURE GEO-2

- Work will be conducted during the dry season when stream flow is minimal or non-existent. Other Best Management Practices (BMPs) prescribed by the California Department of Fish and Game (1602 Agreement) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (CWA 401 Certification or Waiver) will be implemented and will reduce any impacts from erosion to less than significant. A Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Action Plan, submitted as a condition of the Water Quality Certification, will ensure continuing compliance with these erosion control and restoration objectives.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

MITIGATION MEASURES HAZMAT-1

- All equipment would be inspected for leaks before arrival at the project site, again immediately prior to the start of construction, and regularly inspected thereafter until equipment is removed from the project site.
- Equipment would be brought to the site in clean condition, and cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside the project area at an existing Park maintenance yard. Contaminated fluids or materials, if any, would be disposed of outside Park boundaries at a lawfully-permitted or authorized destination.

NOISE

MITIGATION MEASURES NOISE-1

- Construction activities would be limited to the hours between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (except for the two days when helicopter airlifts will likely occur 1-2 hours earlier than this timeframe).
- Internal combustion engines used for any purpose at the job site would be equipped with a muffler of a type prescribed by the manufacturer.

MITIGATION MEASURE NOISE-2

- Interpretive material (trailhead sign and/or pamphlet) will be developed expressly for Wilderness visitors during this time, alerting them to the unusual, one-time construction activity and informing them of the benefits of the proposed project to sensitive Wilderness resources.

CHAPTER 6 REFERENCES

California Department of Parks and Recreation. April 2002. Mount San Jacinto State Park General Plan.

Rischbieter, D. July 2000. Reconnaissance evaluation for select hydrologic resources of Mt. San Jacinto State Park and State Wilderness. On file at California State Parks, Southern Service Center.

Hagberg, T. 1997. Relationships between Hydrology, Vegetation and Gullies in Montane Meadows of the Southern Sierra Nevada. U.S. Forest Service, Sierra National Forest, Kings River Ranger District.

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APPENDIX A
MAPS

- 1) VICINITY MAP
- 2) U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE EXCERPT
- 3) ROUND VALLEY CAMPSITE/TRAIL MAP

APPENDIX B
PROJECT DESIGN GRAPHICS

- 1) AERIAL PHOTO OF PROJECT AREA
- 2) LATERAL CROSS-SECTION (TYPICAL) OF STREAM AT SITE (J)
- 3) LATERAL CROSS-SECTION (TYPICAL) OF STREAM AT SITE (L)

APPENDIX C
CNDDDB RECORD SEARCH

- 1) CNDDDB MAP OF PROJECT AREA AND VICINITY
- 2) CNDDDB REPORT

APPENDIX D

PUBLIC COMMENT LETTERS AND REPOSSES

- 1) MR. BILL BULGER
- 2) MR. FRANK CHESEK
- 3) MR. GEARY HUND, ON BEHALF OF THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, ET AL.

D

Round Valley Headcut Repair and Elevation Restoration
Mount San Jacinto State Park
California Department of Parks & Recreation