

**DRAFT**

**Initial Study  
Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**Saddleback Buttes State Park  
Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project**



**September 2006**



State of California  
**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

Northern Service Center  
Acquisition and Development  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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## MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

**PROJECT:** Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project

**LEAD AGENCY:** California Department of Parks and Recreation

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

- Northern Service Center  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
One Capitol Mall - Suite 410  
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Inland Empire District Headquarters  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
17801 Lake Perris Drive  
Perris, CA 92571
- Saddleback Buttes State Park  
17100 East Avenue J  
Lancaster, CA 93534
- Lancaster Regional Library  
601 W. Lancaster Blvd.  
Lancaster, CA 93534-3398
- California Department of Parks and Recreation, Internet Website:  
[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=980](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=980)

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Parks and Recreation proposes to improve accessibility at various sites within Saddleback Buttes State Park. The following is a brief (detailed description in Ch. 2) description of the proposed work:

- Day Use Area: Modify three existing picnic sites; construct one new double vault restrooms; install an accessible route of travel from picnic sites to restrooms; provide accessible parking
- Campground Area: Modify three sites; modify group sites and common areas to firm, stable surfaces; install an American with Disabilities compliant parking space, water station, and drinking fountains
- Office/Information Center: Provide accessible concrete parking and pathway into the building
- Campfire Center: Provide accessible seating; create accessible route of travel; create firm, stable surface in the seating area
- Downen Nature Trail: Modify the trail to meet California State Park's Accessibility Guidelines and the Federal Access Board's Outdoor Recreation Guidelines.

Saddleback Buttes State Park  
Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvements  
California Department of Parks & Recreation

A copy of the Initial Study is attached. Questions or comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration should be submitted in writing to:

Patricia DuMont – Environmental Coordinator  
California Department of Parks & Recreation  
Northern Service Center  
One Capitol Mall - Suite 500  
Sacramento, CA 95814

E-mail Address: [CEQANSC@parks.ca.gov](mailto:CEQANSC@parks.ca.gov)  
Include “Saddleback Buttes SP Accessibility” on the subject line.

Fax Number: 916-445-8883

Submissions must be in writing and postmarked, or received by fax or e-mail, no later than October 12, 2006. The originals of any faxed document must be received by regular mail within ten (10) working days following the deadline for comments, along with proof of successful fax transmission.

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.

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Patricia DuMont  
Environmental Coordinator  
Northern Service Center

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Date

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Kathy Amann  
Chief, Northern/Southern Service Centers  
Acquisition & Development Division

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Date

Saddleback Buttes State Park  
Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvements  
California Department of Parks & Recreation

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# 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 Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project at Saddleback Buttes State Park, Los Angeles 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.*

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:

Jason Spann – Project Manager  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Accessibility Section  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500  
Sacramento, California 95814  
916-445- 8907

Questions or comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration should be submitted to:

Patricia DuMont – Environmental Coordinator  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Northern Service Center  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500  
Sacramento, California 95814

E-mail Address: [CEQANSC@parks.ca.gov](mailto:CEQANSC@parks.ca.gov)  
Include “Saddleback Buttes SP Accessibility” on the subject line.

Fax Number: 916-445-8883

Submissions must be in writing and postmarked, or received by fax or e-mail, no later than October 12, 2006. The originals of any faxed document must be received by regular mail within ten (10) working days following the deadline for comments, along with proof of successful fax transmission.

### **1.3 PURPOSE AND DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION**

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Trail and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project at Saddleback Buttes 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 Conditions and Mitigation Measures.

This chapter summarizes the conditions and 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 Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement 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.

In accordance with §15064(f) of the CEQA Guidelines, a MND 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. It is proposed that a Mitigated Negative Declaration be adopted in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

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## **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 Trail, Picnic Area, and Accessibility Improvements Project at Saddleback Buttes State Park, located in Los Angeles County, California. The proposed project would increase accessibility to the day use area, campgrounds, campfire center, office/information center, and the Downen Nature Trail to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### **2.2 Project Location**

Saddleback Buttes State Park surrounds Saddleback Butte. Saddleback Butte, rising to an elevation of 3,651 feet, is a granite mountaintop that stands approximately a thousand feet above the Antelope Valley seventeen miles east of Lancaster, on the western edge of the Mojave Desert. The Park was created in 1960 to protect the butte (one of many similar land features in the Antelope Valley) and examples of native Joshua Tree woodlands and other plants and animals that were once common throughout the high desert area.

#### **2.3 Background and Need for the Project**

In July 2005 the California Department of Parks and Recreation agreed to a legal consent decree, *Tucker v. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Case No. C-984935 CRB*, requiring the department to initiate and implement an accessibility transition plan designed to remove barriers and improve the accessibility of park facilities according to ADA guidelines and recommendations. This Accessibility Transition Plan developed the following criteria as a basis for prioritizing and implementing improvements at state park units.

- Level of Use by the Public
- Number of Activities Offered
- Program Uniqueness
- Park Geographic Distribution

Using these criteria Saddleback Buttes State Park was given a priority level 1, which is the highest priority. The primary purpose of this project is to implement these departmental commitments and improve visitor accessibility as specifically applied to Saddleback Buttes State Park.

#### **2.4 Project Objectives**

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the

state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality recreation.

The intent of this project is to improve the accessibility of the Day Use Area, the Campground Area, Office/Information Center, and the Downen Nature Trail at Saddleback Buttes State Park to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines. The recommended work is expected to:

- Increase the accessibility to important park features in order to provide a high quality recreational experience to all users.

The proposed accessibility improvement project and all its components would allow the Department to meet its mission to provide visitors to Saddleback Buttes SP high-quality camping and recreational opportunities.

## **2.5 Project Description**

The Department of Parks and Recreation proposes to improve accessibility at various sites within Saddleback Buttes State Park. The following is a description of the proposed work:

### **Day Use Area:**

- Modify 3 existing picnic sites for access,
  - Rehabilitate existing furniture to meet accessibility design standards
  - Install water stations as needed
  - Level surfaces, using fill and or soil stabilizer, as needed; requires up to 6" of soil disturbance
- Install an accessible, concrete route of travel, up to 5' wide, from picnic sites to restrooms.
- Provide an accessible, concrete parking surface.
- Remove 2 existing outdoor restrooms
- Construct one new, self-contained, double vault CXT-style restroom; installation will require 13'x13'x5' excavation.

### **Campground Area:**

- Modify 3 existing sites for access
  - Rehabilitate furniture to meet accessibility design standards
  - Construct accessible concrete routes up to 5' wide from parking to restrooms.
- Modify group sites, tent sites, and common areas to firm and stable surfaces, requiring soil disturbance up to 6".
- Install a 20' X 20' ADA compliant parking space, requiring soil disturbance up to 6".
- Install ADA compliant water stations and drinking fountains as needed.

### **Office/Information Center:**

- Provide accessible, concrete parking and pathway into building, including an accessible ramp to one door above grade.

### **Campfire Center:**

- Create an accessible concrete route, up to 5' wide.
- Provide accessible seating at front and rear of campfire center.
- Create a firm/stable soil surface in the seating areas.
- Work will require 6" of soil disturbance and the use of soil stabilizers.

**Downen Nature Trail:** Modify the Downen Nature Trail to meet accessibility requirements and guidelines as stated in "California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines", and the federal access board's outdoor recreation guidelines.

- Construct approximately 3,172 linear feet (lf) X 4' wide trail utilizing approximately 1,361 lf of existing trail and 1,824 lf of proposed trail re-routes to provide a firm stable trail surface and reduce slope steepness.
- Construct approximately 3,172 lf of turnpike using natural and amended soil blended with aggregate and soil stabilizer and edged (on one or both sides) with 4'X6' Trex® lumber, dry laid stone, or mortared stone designed to complement surrounding natural conditions.
- Turnpike sections will be located in areas with minimal slope and areas that require edging for surface stability. Turnpike sections will overlay the existing trail alignments to remain and provide a firm stable and maintainable trail surface.
- Rehabilitate approximately 1,384 lf of abandoned trail sections to natural conditions
- Install approximately 3 new interpretive panels, 2 new trailhead signs, 3 new benches, and 1 new overlook along the proposed trail.
- Remove or relocate approximately 6 of the existing 13 interpretive trail station designation posts.
- Remove or relocate the existing trailhead sign to the new trailhead directly to the east of the Visitor Center.
- Resurface, re-stripe, and re-sign the existing parking area located directly to the east of the Visitor Center for 1 ADA compliant van space.
- Excavate and/or relocate approximately 500 cubic ft of rock as required to meet trail accessibility guidelines and provide a sustainable trail alignment. Excavated or moved rock would be relocated to the sides of the trail or used in retaining wall construction.
- Remove and/or transplant approximately 720 sq ft of native vegetation as required to constructed the trail and revegetate existing trail no longer required.

## **2.6 Project Implementation**

Construction would occur in winter 2007, or soon thereafter, and continue for approximately four months. Work would occur only during daylight hours; however, weekend work could be implemented to accelerate construction or address emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

Heavy equipment, such as mechanical wheelbarrows, hand-operated compactors, all-terrain vehicles, backhoe, bobcat, compressor, and small dump truck would be used

during construction. Most equipment would be transported to the site and remain until associated work is completed. Transport vehicles for material or equipment delivery trucks, and crew vehicles would also be present intermittently at the site. Staging areas for equipment would be confined to parking areas.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be incorporated into this project design to ensure that the natural and cultural resources in and around the project area are adequately protected during and after construction. The BMPs discussed in this document and used in the implementation of this project were obtained from the *California Stormwater Quality Association (CSQA), Stormwater Best Management Practices Construction Handbook*. Temporary BMPs would be used to keep sediment on-site throughout the duration of the project; during construction, BMPs would be checked daily, maintained, and modified as needed; and BMPs would be used after construction to stabilize the site and minimize erosion.

The Department of Parks and Recreation has consistently referenced CSQA BMPs and has identified them as an acceptable standard for use in all State Parks.

## 2.7 Visitation to Saddleback Buttes State Park

Although this project would increase accessibility, visitation is not expected to significantly increase as a result of this project.

Year	Paid Day Use	Free Day Use	Overnight Camping	Total Attendance
1996	1006	4424	1841	7271
1997	505	1945	760	3210
1998	867	3031	1789	5687
1999	1493	4242	1814	7549
2000	887	3370	1673	5930
2001	96	4947	2535	7578
2002	0	5736	2858	8594
2003	459	3865	3260	7584
2004	504	5568	2967	9039
2005	716	2664	3583	6963
Total Attendance	6533	39,792	23,080	69,405
Average Attendance	653	3979	2308	6941

## 2.8 Consistency with Local Plans and Policies

The proposed project to rehabilitate the campground, office/information center, campfire center, Day Use Area, and the Downen Nature Trail to meet ADA Guidelines would occur entirely within Saddleback Buttes State Park. Although this park does not have a General Plan, work to repair, replace, or rehabilitate existing facilities or to protect public health and safety are permitted under PRC § 5002.2 (c). This project is also consistent

with the State Parks mission and its management directives aimed at creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. This project does not conflict with local plans or land-use policies for the immediate area.

## **2.9 Discretionary Approvals**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation retains approval authority for the proposed Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvements project at Saddleback Buttes State Park. However, this project requires consultation with:

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
- Additional internal document review includes compliance with PRC § 5024

State Parks will acquire all necessary reviews and permits prior to implementing any project components requiring regulatory review.

## **2.10 Related Projects**

The Department of Parks and Recreation often has smaller maintenance programs schedule for the park unit. According to District staff, there are no projects planned for the proposed project area in the foreseeable future.

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## CHAPTER 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

### PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project
2. Lead Agency Name & Address: California Department of Parks and Recreation
3. Contact Person & Phone Number: Jason Spann, 916-445-8907
4. Project Location: Saddleback Buttes State Park
5. Project Sponsor Name & Address: California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Acquisition and Planning Division  
Northern Service Center  
One Capital Mall - Suite 500  
Sacramento, California 95814
6. General Plan Designation: No General Plan has been prepared for this park.
7. Zoning: Open Space
8. Description of Project:  
The Department of Parks and Recreation proposes to improve accessibility at various sites within Saddleback Buttes State Park. The following is a brief description of the proposed work:
  - Day Use Area: Modify three existing picnic sites; construct two new double vault restrooms; install an accessible route of travel from picnic sites to restrooms; provide accessible parking
  - Campground Area: Modify three sites; modify group sites and common areas to firm, stable surfaces; install an American with Disabilities compliant parking space, water station, and drinking fountains
  - Office/Information Center: Provide accessible concrete parking and pathway into the building
  - Campfire Center: Provide accessible seating; create accessible route of travel; create firm, stable surface in the seating area
  - Downen Nature Trail: Modify the trail to meet California State Park's Accessibility Guidelines and the Federal Access Board's Outdoor Recreation Guidelines.
9. Surrounding Land Uses & Setting: Refer to Chapter 3 of this document (Section IX, Land Use Planning)
10. Approval Required from Other Public Agencies

**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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia DuMont  
Environmental Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
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.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

## I. AESTHETICS

### Environmental Setting

Created in 1960 to protect the butte, Saddleback Butte State Park (SBSP) showcases examples of the native Joshua Tree woodlands and other plants and animals that were once common throughout this high desert area. Saddleback Butte State Park is located 17 miles east of the City of Lancaster on Avenue J East. Located on the western edge of the Mojave Desert, Saddleback Butte, a granitic mountaintop, rises to an elevation of 3,651 feet, standing at least 1,000 feet above the broad alluvial land of the Antelope Valley. SBSP is located in what is known as the Mojave Block of the San Andreas Fault Zone.

Saddleback Butte is the major visitor attraction of SBSP. A hiking trail in the park takes visitors to the top of Saddleback Butte where they can enjoy a 360° view of the Antelope Valley, to the west, and the Mojave Desert, to the east. In the springtime wildflowers can be expected to put on a scenic display of color.

The California Legislature initiated the California Scenic Highway Program in 1963, with the goal of preserving and protecting the state's scenic highway corridors from changes that would reduce their aesthetic value. The State Scenic Highway System consists of eligible and officially designated routes. A highway may be identified as eligible for listing as a state scenic highway if it offers travelers scenic views of the natural landscape, largely undisturbed by development. Eligible routes advance to officially designated status when the local jurisdiction adopts ordinances to establish a scenic corridor protection program and receives approval from the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans, 2002). In Los Angeles County there is only one officially designated State Scenic Highway, State Route 2, located south of the park, and one eligible State Scenic Highway, Interstate 210, located approximately 30 miles to the west of the park.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 proposes to improve the day use areas, campgrounds, the office/information center, the campfire center, and the Downen Nature Trail to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The scenic vista would not be impacted by the upgrades.
- b) Saddleback Buttes and the scenic views it provides to visitors would be considered a scenic resource on its own. The proposed project would improve an existing trail to comply with ADA; however, would not impact the scenic values of the feature. As mentioned above in the Environmental Setting, there are no scenic highways located near Saddleback Butte State Park nor is the proposed location for the modified trail located within a state scenic highway easement or viewshed. No historic buildings or rock outcroppings exist within the proposed project area. No impact.
- c) The Downen Nature Trail is an existing feature. The project proposes to widen and stabilize portions of the existing trail while utilizing turnpiking to improve other trail sections. The modified trail would not degrade the existing visual character of the site and is consistent with the current use. No impact.
- d) Lighting is not a part of this project and no new light sources or glare would be introduced into the landscape. All construction work would be limited to daylight hours, eliminating the need for work lights. No impact.

## II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

### Environmental Setting

Saddleback Buttes SP is located southeast of the junction of East Avenue J and N 170<sup>th</sup> St East in Los Angeles County. In 1960, the Park was created to protect the 3,651 ft. high butte and the high desert acreage surrounding it at about 2600 ft. elevation. Saddleback Buttes SP is approximately 3,000 acres and is recognized by the city of Lancaster and L.A. County as a Significant Ecological Area (LAC, 1986).

Prior to 1960, the land was used for agriculture except during times of drought. Primarily grains were grown in the area with occasional cattle grazing (Dallas 2006). Today the park does not support any agriculture or farmland operations. None of the land within the park is included in any of the Important Farmland categories, as delimited by the California Department of Conservation under the Farmland and Monitoring Program (LACSD, 2005). One parcel designated grazing land is situated adjacent to the park's southwest boundary.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT*:</b>				
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, b, c) As noted in the environmental setting above, Saddleback Buttes SP does not support any agricultural operations or farmland. All work proposed for this project would be confined within park boundaries in areas that do not abut agricultural parcels outside the park. The proposed work in this project would not result in the conversion of agricultural land to a non-agricultural use, or change any existing zoning.

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### III. AIR QUALITY

#### Environmental Setting

Saddleback Buttes SP is located in the northeast corner of Los Angeles County included in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), managed by the Antelope Valley Air Pollution Control District (AVAPCD), and under the jurisdiction of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region IX. The AVAPCD is bordered by the Kern County line on the north, the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, the San Bernardino County line to the east and the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the west. With approximately 320,000 residents, the AVAQMD ranks tenth in population among the State's 35 air districts.

The AVAPCD operates and maintains air-monitoring equipment at key locations throughout the entire Mojave Desert Air Basin, including a certified monitoring site in Lancaster. These monitoring stations measure criteria pollutants such as ozone (a major component of smog), oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide and fine particulates. Data collected by the surveillance team is used to chart the Districts progress toward the attainment of State and Federal ambient air quality standards, and to ascertain local air quality trends. In addition, the District contracts with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District for other services (AVAPCD, 2006).

The California Air Board (CARB) makes State area designations for ten criteria pollutants (an air pollutant for which acceptable levels of exposure can be determined and for which an ambient air quality standard has been set): ozone, suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), fine suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, sulfates, lead, hydrogen sulfide, and visibility reducing particles (VRPs). At the State level, both Ozone and PM<sub>10</sub> have been designated "non-attainment" in the MDAB. Carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, sulfates, and lead levels have been designated attainment; and hydrogen sulfide and VRP levels have been designated unclassified. A pollutant is designated in attainment if the state standard for that pollutant was not violated at any site in the area during a three-year period. Conversely, a pollutant is designated non-attainment if there was at least one violation of a State standard for that pollutant in the area. Unclassified means the data is incomplete and designation of attainment or non-attainment is not supportable. An area is designated non-attainment / transitional to signify that the area is close to attaining the standard for that pollutant (CARB, 2006).

In contrast to the State area designations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) makes national area designations for five criteria pollutants: ozone (1-hour and 8-hour standards), PM<sub>10</sub>, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide. At the National level, only ozone is designated "non-attainment" for both the 1-hour and 8-hour standard; sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and PM<sub>10</sub> are all designated as "unclassified". Nationally, any area that does not meet (or that contributes to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet) one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for the criteria pollutants designated in the Clean Air Act is designated "non-attainment". An area considered to have air quality as good as or better than the national ambient air quality standards as defined in the Clean Air Act is designated "attainment"; and an area that cannot be classified on the basis of available data as meeting or not meeting the national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard is designated "unclassified" (U.S. EPA, 2006).

	State Levels	Federal Levels
Ozone	Non-Attainment	1 hour & 8 hour Standard Non-Attainment
Carbon Monoxide	Attainment	Unclassified
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment	Unclassified
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment	Unclassified
Particulate Matter (PM 2.5)	Unclassified	Unclassified
Particulate Matter (PM10)	Non-Attainment	Unclassified
Sulfates	Attainment	N/A
Lead	Attainment	N/A
Hydrogen Sulfide	Unclassified	N/A
Visibility Reducing Particles	Unclassified	N/A

Individual or groups that would be especially reactive to criteria pollutants are considered sensitive receptors, such as children, the elderly and those who are acutely or chronically ill. Facilities where sensitive receptors are likely to be located include schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, retirement and convalescent homes, hospitals, medical clinics, and residences. No sensitive receptor facilities are located near the proposed project site.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT*:</b>				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 by this project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of any applicable air quality management plan for Antelope Valley Air Pollution Control District.
- b,c) The proposed project would not emit air contaminants at a level that, by themselves, would violate any air quality standard, or contribute to a permanent or long-term increase in any air contaminant. However, project implementation would generate short-term emissions of fugitive dust (PM<sub>10</sub>) and involve the use of equipment and materials that would emit ozone precursors. Increased emissions of PM<sub>10</sub> and ozone precursors could contribute to existing non-attainment and non-attainment/transitional conditions, which could interfere with achieving the projected attainment standards. However, integration of the following conditions into the project design will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

### Air Conditions 1

- All active construction areas will be watered at least twice daily during dry, dusty conditions.
- All trucks hauling soil, sand, or other loose materials on public roads will be covered or required to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
- All equipment engines will be maintained in good condition, in proper tune (according to manufacturer's specifications), and in compliance with all State and federal requirements.
- Excavation and grading activities will be suspended when sustained winds exceed 25 miles mph, instantaneous gusts exceed 35 mph, or dust from construction might obscure driver visibility on public roads.
- Earth or other material that has been transported onto paved streets by trucks, construction equipment, erosion, or other project-related activity will be promptly removed.

- d) As noted in Discussion III(b,c) above, project construction would generate dust and equipment exhaust emissions for the duration of the project. Park visitors with conditions that make them sensitive to these emissions would have the option of avoiding the area altogether or remaining in portions of the park that would be upwind or protected from blowing dust or other emissions. Work would occur along the Downen Nature trail, in the Day Use Area, Campfire Center, Office/Information Center, and the Campground Area. Equipment use that could generate fugitive dust would be of limited duration, both in daily operation and as a percentage of the proposed work for this project. Integration of **Air Conditions 1** above, into the project design will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.
- e) Proposed work would not result in the long-term generation of odors. Construction-related emissions might result in a short-term generation of odors, including diesel exhaust and fuel vapors; these odors might be considered objectionable by some park visitors and employees. However, construction activities would be short-term and odorous emissions would dissipate rapidly in the air, with increased distance from the source. Potential odor impacts would be considered less than significant.

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## IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Environmental Setting

The creosote bush alliance (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf, 1995) is the only plant community that would be affected by implementation of the proposed project. This alliance, also known as Mojave creosote bush scrub (Holland 1986), is dominated on the project site by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*). Other important species include white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus teretifolius*), and golden bush (*Isocoma acradenia* var. *acradenia*) in the shrub layer with scattered emergent Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*). The herbaceous layer is dominated seasonally by Bigelow's coreopsis (*Coreopsis bigelovii*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), desert fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata*), and bird-cage evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*).

### Special-Status Species<sup>1</sup>

Sensitive biological resources that occur or potentially occur on the proposed project site are discussed in this section. Sensitive biological resources include plants and animals that have been given special recognition by federal, state, or local resource agencies and organizations. Also included are habitats that are listed as critical for the survival of a listed species or have special value for wildlife species, and plant communities that are unique or of limited distribution and are considered sensitive.

Queries of the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB, 2006) and the California Native Plant Society's On-line Inventory (CNPS, 2006) were conducted for sensitive biological resources that are known to occur within the Hi Vista, California 7.5-minute U.S.G.S. quadrangle maps. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Ventura Field Office website was queried for sensitive species in Los Angeles County. All sensitive biological resources were evaluated for potential impacts by this project.

### **Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species That are Known to Occur, or Could Potentially Occur Within Saddleback Buttes State Park**

#### PLANT SPECIES

Seven special status plant species are listed in the CNPS<sup>2</sup> on-line inventory (Appendix A) as potentially occurring within the Hi Vista 7.5-minute quadrangle map. Of these, none of the plant species are known to occur within Saddleback Buttes State Park and none were observed

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, special-status species are defined as plants and animals that are legally protected or that are considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies and organizations. Specifically, this includes species listed as state or federally Threatened or Endangered, those considered as candidates for listing as Threatened or Endangered, species identified by the USFWS and/or CDFG as Species of Concern, animals identified by CDFG as Fully Protected or Protected, and plants considered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to be rare, threatened, or endangered (i.e., plants on CNPS lists 1 and 2).

<sup>2</sup> California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Lists: List 1A = presumed extinct in California; List 1B = rare or endangered in California and elsewhere; List 2 = rare or endangered in California, more common elsewhere; List 3 = need more information; List 4 = plants of limited distribution. New threat code extensions are: .1 = seriously endangered in California; .2 = fairly endangered in California; and .3 not very endangered in California.

in the project area during sensitive plant species surveys conducted in April 2006 (i.e., during the blooming season for the species of interest). The USFWS online species list for Los Angeles County produced an additional 9 special-status plant species that could be affected by projects in Los Angeles County. None of these species are known to occur in the Hi Vista quadrangle map area and none occur in the creosote bush alliance. They are therefore not addressed in this document. The USFWS online species list is attached in Appendix A. The CNDDDB has no record of special-status plant species occurrences in the Hi Vista 7.5-minute quadrangle map area.

The following special-status plant species are those occurring on the CNPS list of plant species with potential to occur in the Hi Vista 7.5-minute quadrangle map area.

**Lancaster milk-vetch** (*Astragalus preussii* var. *laxiflorus*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.1 perennial plant species that occurs in alkaline flats within chenopod scrub at approximately 700 meters elevation. It blooms from March through May. Suitable habitat for this species does not occur within the proposed project area and the species was not observed during blooming period surveys in April 2006. Therefore, Lancaster milk-vetch will not be affected by project implementation.

**Alkali mariposa lily** (*Calochortus striatus*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.2 plant species that occurs in chaparral, chenopod scrub, moist creosote scrub, and alkaline mesic meadows and seeps between 70 and 1595 meters in elevation. It is a perennial herbaceous species that blooms from April to June. Suitable habitats for the species do not occur in the project area and the species was not detected during blooming period surveys in April 2006. Therefore, alkali mariposa lily will not be affected by implementation of this project.

**Clokey's cryptantha** (*Cryptantha clokeyi*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.1 annual plant species that blooms in April and occurs in sandy or gravelly soils from 800-900 meters in elevation. It is known only from Mojavean desert scrub habitat in the Barstow area. Clokey's cryptantha is not known from the Saddleback Buttes area and is not expected to occur on the project site. It was not observed during April 2006 surveys of the project site for sensitive plant species. Therefore, Clokey's cryptantha will not be affected by project implementation.

**Desert cymopterus** (*Cymopterus deserticola*) - This is a CNPS List 1B.2 perennial plant species that occurs in sandy soils in Mojavean desert scrub between 630-1500 meters in elevation and blooms from March to May. Potential habitat for the species occurs in the project area. However, the species was not observed in the project area during April 2006 surveys of the project site. Therefore, desert cymopterus will not be affected by project implementation.

**Barstow woolly sunflower** (*Eriophyllum mohavense*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.2 annual plant species that occurs in chenopod scrub and creosote bush scrub at elevations of 500-960 meters. It blooms from April to May. While potential habitat for the species occurs in the project area, it was not observed there during the blooming season survey in April 2006. Therefore, Barstow woolly sunflower will not be affected by project implementation.

**Sagebrush loeflingia** (*Loeflingia squarrosa* var. *artemisiarum*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.1 annual plant species that occurs on sand dunes and sandy flats in Great Basin scrub and

Sonoran Desert scrub from 700-1200 meters in elevation. Suitable habitat for the species does not occur in the project area and the species was not detected during blooming period surveys in April 2006. Therefore, sagebrush loeflingia will not be affected by implementation of this project.

**Parish's popcorn-flower** (*Plagiobothrys parishii*) – This is a CNPS List 1B.1 annual plant species that occurs in wet alkaline soils near desert springs in Great Basin scrub and Joshua Tree woodland. There is only one known occurrence of this species in California. Suitable habitat for the species does not occur in the project area and the species was not detected during blooming period surveys in April 2006. Therefore, Parish's popcorn-flower will not be affected by implementation of this project.

### WILDLIFE SPECIES

The CNDDDB query on the Hi Vista 7.5-minute quadrangle map produced a list of 4 species with known occurrences (Appendix A). The 9-quadrangle map (those quadrangles surrounding the Hi Vista quad) query produced a list of 8 special-status wildlife species that have known occurrences in these map areas. Of these species, 3 are known to occur within Saddleback Buttes State Park. They are addressed below along with species that could potentially occur in the project area based upon the presence of suitable habitat. The USFWS online species list for Los Angeles County (Appendix A) produced an additional 18 special-status fish and wildlife species that could be affected by projects in Los Angeles County. Saddleback Buttes State Park and the project site are out of the range for these 18 species and/or do not offer suitable habitat for them. These species are therefore not discussed in this document.

### Birds

**Prairie falcon** (*Falco mexicanus*) – This is a State Species of Special Concern that is found throughout the western Mojave Desert. Nests are located on cliffs in rugged mountain ranges typically within a half mile of a water source (USDI-BLM, 2003). In winter, the birds disperse widely. The CNDDDB (2006) has a 1978 occurrence for this species at Piute Butte within Antelope Valley Indian Museum SHP located approximately 2 miles from Saddleback Buttes SP. The Saddleback Buttes may offer suitable habitat for nesting prairie falcon, but suitable habitat does not occur within or near the proposed project area. It is unlikely that prairie falcon will be affected by project implementation.

**Le Conte's thrasher** (*Toxostoma lecontei*) – This is a State Species of Special Concern that inhabits creosote bush scrub with stands of cholla cactus, Joshua trees, and thorny shrubs and is known to occur throughout the western Mojave Desert (USDI-BLM, 2003). The CNDDDB has a 1986 record for Le Conte's thrasher within Saddleback Butte State Park. Suitable habitat for the species occurs in the project area. If present in the project area, Le Conte's thrasher could be affected by implementation of the project.

**Burrowing owl** (*Athene cunicularia*) – This is a State Species of Special Concern that occurs in level grassland, prairie, or desert floor habitat. There are 53 records of burrowing owl occurrence in the western Mojave Desert. Twenty-three of these are from Edwards Air Force Base (USDI-BLM, 2003) located approximately 20 miles north of Saddleback Buttes State Park. While unknown to occur at Saddleback Buttes State Park, suitable habitat for the species could occur there. If present in the project area during construction activities, impacts to burrowing owl could occur as a result of project implementation.

**Migratory Bird Species** – Nesting migratory bird species are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If present within the project area during construction activities, nesting migratory bird species could be affected by project implementation.

### Mammals

**Mohave ground squirrel** (*Spermophilus mohavensis*) – This is a State Threatened species that is known to occur within Saddleback Buttes State Park and could occur within the project area. The species lives in underground burrows, in which it spends at least seven months of the year (usually from July or August through February) in estivation. It is a resident of various desert scrub communities, including creosote bush scrub, in the western Mojave Desert of southwestern Inyo, eastern Kern, northwestern San Bernardino, and extreme northeastern Los Angeles counties. Mohave ground squirrel is threatened by loss and degradation of its habitat due to clearing for agriculture and military activities and for urban, suburban, and rural development, livestock grazing, and off-highway vehicles (DFG 2006, website). Since there is a potential for the occurrence of Mohave ground squirrel on the project site, this species could be affected by project implementation.

**Southern grasshopper mouse** (*Onychomys torridus ramona*) – This is a State Species of Special Concern that is found in arid desert habitats of the Mojave Desert and the southern Central Valley of California. Alkali desert scrub and desert scrub habitats are preferred. Southern grasshopper mouse nests in burrows abandoned by other rodents or excavate their own (Zeiner et al., 1990). According to the CNDDDB (2006), the species prefers scrub habitat with low to moderate shrub cover that has friable soils for digging. There are no known occurrences for this species in Saddleback Buttes State Park. However, suitable habitat for the species occurs in the project area. If present in the project area, the species could be affected by project implementation.

**American badger** (*Taxidea taxus*) – This is a State Species of Special Concern that was historically found in many habitats throughout California, with the exception of habitats in the northern north coast (Zeiner et al., 1990 and DFG 2006). Little current data exists on this species but they are believed to have drastically declined or been extirpated over much of their historic range in California (DFG 2006). Historically, they were most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats with friable soils in which they dug their burrows. While unlikely that the species is present in the project area, potentially-suitable habitat occurs there. If present during project construction, the species could be affected.

### Reptiles

**Desert tortoise** (*Gopherus agassizii*) – This is a State and Federal Threatened species that is known to occur at Saddleback Buttes State Park. The desert tortoise is a large, herbivorous reptile. In California, the desert tortoise occurs primarily within the creosote, shadscale, and Joshua tree alliance of Mojave desert scrub, and the lower Colorado River Valley subdivision of Sonoran desert scrub. Soils must be friable enough for digging of burrows, but firm enough so that burrows do not collapse. In California, desert tortoises are typically associated with gravelly flats or sandy soils with some clay, but are occasionally found in windblown sand or in rocky terrain. Desert tortoises occur in the California desert from below sea level to an elevation of 7,300 feet, but the most favorable habitat occurs at elevations of approximately 1,000 to 3,000 feet. Desert tortoises are most active in California during the spring and early



summer when annual plants are most common. Additional activity occurs during warmer fall months and occasionally after summer rain storms. Desert tortoises spend the remainder of the year in burrows, escaping the extreme conditions of the desert (USFWS 2006). Although not known to occur in the project area, potential burrows for the species were observed within 1 mile of the project area along the Little Butte Trail in April 2006, but none were discovered in the proposed Downen Nature Trail project area. If desert tortoise is present in the project area, this species could be affected by implementation of the project.

**Mojave fringe-toed lizard (*Uma scoparia*)** – This is a State Species of Special Concern that is found only in dunes, sand fields, sand hummocks, and other sand deposits throughout the Mojave Desert in California. It is found between 300 and 3000 feet in elevation. According to USDI-BLM (2003), this species is known to occur in the Saddleback Buttes area. While small patches of sand occur within the project area, there are no dunes, sand fields, sand hummocks, or other large sand deposits that could provide suitable habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard. Therefore, no impacts would occur to this species as a result of project implementation.

**Sensitive Plant Communities**

Sensitive natural plant communities are communities that are especially diverse, regionally uncommon, or of special concern to local, state, and federal agencies. Removal or substantial degradation of these communities would constitute a significant adverse impact under CEQA. The only plant community that would be affected by project implementation is the creosote bush alliance, which is not considered to be a sensitive plant community by the CNDDDB. Therefore, no sensitive plant communities will be affected by implementation of the proposed project.

**Wetlands and Waters of the United States**

A site investigation for the presence of U.S. Corps of Engineers (USACOE) jurisdictional wetlands was conducted within the project area on April 18, 2006 by a DPR qualified biologist. No wetlands or other waters of the U.S. were observed within the project area or within Saddleback Buttes State Park. Therefore, no wetlands or USACOE-jurisdictional waters would be affected by project implementation.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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) **Desert tortoise.** Burrows that might belong to desert tortoise have been observed along the Little Butte Trail alignment within approximately 1 mile of the proposed project area. However, no potential burrows were observed within the Downen Nature Trail project area. Discussions with both the Ventura office of the USFWS and DFG have occurred with regard to the potential burrows. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce project impacts to desert tortoise to less than significant.

<b>Mitigation Measure Bio-1 Desert Tortoise Avoidance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to construction, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor with experience surveying for desert tortoise will survey for desert tortoise burrows.</li> <li>• The surveys will be protocol-level surveys only if required by DFG and/or USFWS. Otherwise, they will be conducted for habitat suitability and for sign of desert tortoise activity indicating the species presence/absence in, or near, the project area.</li> <li>• If active burrows are found within or near the project area, they will be flagged and avoided. If necessary, the trail will be re-routed to avoid burrows that go under the proposed alignment or could be otherwise impacted by project implementation.</li> <li>• All construction personnel will be trained by a qualified biologist to recognize desert tortoise and to be aware of all avoidance measures.</li> <li>• If surveys indicate presence of desert tortoise within the vicinity of the project site, a desert tortoise monitor will be onsite during all construction-related activities</li> <li>• No handling of desert tortoise will occur under any circumstances.</li> </ul>

**Mohave ground squirrel.** Mohave ground squirrel is known to occur within Saddleback Buttes State Park within creosote bush scrub habitat. Presence of Mohave ground squirrel in the project area is assumed. A DFG 2081 take permit will be obtained for this project.

After consultation, DFG agreed upon the following measure as mitigation for potential impacts to Mohave ground squirrel and the species habitat.

<b>Mitigation Measure Bio 2 – Mojave Ground Squirrel</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DPR will purchase credits in a mitigation bank near California City through the Desert Tortoise Protection Committee on a 2:1 ratio for all new project-related impacts to Mohave ground squirrel habitat.</li><li>• DPR will restore old trail segments with creosote bush scrub habitat using locally-native species and plant material collected locally.</li></ul>

**Nesting Migratory Bird Species Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.** Nests of migratory bird species could occur within the proposed project area. The following avoidance measures are designed to reduce project-related impacts to nesting migratory bird species to a less than significant level.

<b>Mitigation Measure Bio 3 – Migratory Bird Species</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If construction-related activities are scheduled to begin during the nesting season of February 1 to August 31, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor will conduct a survey for nesting bird species within one week prior to the commencement of construction to identify the location(s) of active migratory bird nests. Surveys will include the project area and extend out 100 feet from the project area perimeter</li><li>• A 100-foot buffer will be placed around each active nest. No construction-related activities will occur within this buffer area until young have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.</li></ul>

**American badger.** Although not known to occur in the project area, potentially-suitable habitat exists. The following avoidance measures are designed to reduce project-related impacts to American badger, if present, to a less than significant level.

<b>Mitigation Measure Bio 4 – American Badger Avoidance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prior to the start of construction, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor will conduct a survey for American badger burrows.</li><li>• If badger burrows are present, they will be mapped and protected from project-related impacts during the nesting season of June 1 through October 15, or as negotiated with the California Department of Fish and Game.</li></ul>

**Le Conte’s thrasher.** Although not known to occur in the project area, past records indicate that the species is or has been present within the park unit. The following avoidance measures are designed to reduce project-related impacts to Le Conte’s thrasher, if present, to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation Measure Bio 5 – Le Conte’s Thrasher**

- A DPR-qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for Le Conte’s thrasher during the nesting season of January through June 30.
- If Le Conte’s thrasher is observed nesting within 200 feet of the project area, DPR or its contractor will place a 200-foot buffer around the active nest. No construction-related activities will occur within the buffer area until the young have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

**Burrowing owl.** Although not known to occur in the project area, potentially-suitable habitat occurs within the park unit for this species. The following avoidance measures are designed to reduce project-related impacts to burrowing owl, if present, to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation Measure Bio-6 - Burrowing Owl Avoidance**

- A DPR-qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for burrowing owl burrows.
- If an active burrowing owl burrow is observed within 500 feet of the project area, DPR or its contractor will place a 500-foot buffer around the burrow. No construction-related impacts will occur within the buffer area as long as the burrow is being used by burrowing owls.

**Southern grasshopper mouse.** Although not known to occur in the project area, potentially-suitable habitat occurs within the park unit for this species. The following avoidance measures are designed to reduce project-related impacts to southern grasshopper mouse, if present, to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation Measure Bio 7 – Southern Grasshopper Mouse Avoidance**

- All holes and trenches will be covered at the close of each working day with plywood or similar materials, or will include escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks to avoid trapping small mammals.

**Sensitive plant species.** Based upon plant surveys conducted by a DPR qualified biologist in April 2006, there are no special-status plant species occurring within the project area.

- b) There are no sensitive plant communities, including riparian habitats, in or near the project area.
- c) There are no wetlands or other waters of the United States within, or near, the project area.
- d) Mojave ground squirrels, Le Conte’s thrasher, and desert tortoise are known to occur within Saddleback Buttes SP. These species could occur within or near the project area. Potential also exists for the presence of other State Species of Special Concern. Please

see Discussion point a) above for explanation of avoidance and mitigation measures to be implemented on the proposed project for all these species.

e,f) This project does not conflict with any local ordinances, adopted conservation plans, or policies.

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## **V. CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Environmental Setting**

Saddleback Butte located within Antelope Valley, with about 3000 acres of land is situated about 17 miles southeast of Lancaster and about 3 miles east of the Antelope Valley Indian Museum (AVIM). The vegetation in the park is characterized as Joshua tree woodland, with creosote bush dominating the landscape (Sampson 1994). Saddleback Butte peak rises to 3,651 feet, while most of the park is at about the 2600 foot level.

Two cultural information searches have been conducted in the park: one in December 1987 and the other in March 2002. The results of these searches showed no recorded archeological sites in the park. The park was surveyed once completely in about 1962 by members of the Archaeological Survey at UCLA. The work was conducted by Robert H. Crabtree and J. Ruby under contract to then Division of Beaches and Parks. They found no cultural resources in the park. A letter report states that they surveyed the entire park for cultural resources (Crabtree 1963).

A cultural survey conducted by Mike Sampson of DPR in 1987 for a new trail, found 3 isolated fragments of groundstone. He found one mano fragment near the campground, one metate near the western park boundary, and one metate near the middle of the park. He also found five mining prospects at the extreme eastern end and northern end of the park. Lumber and stove-pipe parts were found in one area of the park. Sparse 1950's house trash was also found on the surface. No other cultural resources have been found in the park. Mike found nothing cultural in the area of the Saddleback Peak trail. (Sampson 1994).

### **Historic Resources:**

In 1772 Pedro Fages led Spanish soldiers across the southern portion of the Antelope Valley. Four years later, Francisco Garces, a Spanish Padre assigned to the San Fernando Mission, traveled through part of the valley. These early Spanish explorers were probably the earliest Europeans to contact the Serrano Indians. Permanent European settlement came to the valley with the overland stage coach station at Willow Springs (about 20 miles north of the AVIM). The Southern Pacific Railroad came in 1876. During the 1870's and 1880's, settlers planted wheat and orchards in the foothills, while cattle ranching stayed in the valley (Bevil, 2000). Wheat was pretty successful in the desert heat. However, a sustained drought starting in 1895 retarded the development and many settlers moved on.

Growth in the valley remained fairly stagnant until 1905, when work began on the Los Angeles aqueduct, which was built to bring water to Los Angeles. The work on the aqueduct and the advances in well-drilling techniques, led to increased farming and settlement in the area. The agricultural development reinvigorated the area and with the railroad, shipping products to Los Angeles was cost effective.

### **Historic Archaeological Resources:**

There is evidence of mining prospects and/or claims in the park, although no data has been found related to these finds to this point. Surface evidence of milled lumber and stove parts has been found in the park. These could indicate the earlier presence of a cabin, possibly

related to the mining industry (Sampson, 1994).

**Prehistoric Archaeological Resources:**

Ethnographic

A portion of the Antelope Valley was occupied by Takic speaking people known as the Serrano. The major portion of the Antelope Valley was probably held by Kitanemuk and Vanyume speakers (King and Blackburn 1978:535). The Serrano term has been applied to as many as five Native American groups: Kitanemuk, Alliklik (also known as Tativiam), Vanyume, the Desert Serrano, and possibly the Tativiam. This area is also very near four neighboring tribal groups including the Kawaiisu (near Tehachapi) to the North, Tativiam to the west, the Cahuilla to the South, and the Paiute to the far-eastern desert. Most of these groups lived a similar nomadic lifestyle. The general Serrano territory extended from the Cajon Pass out beyond Twenty-Nine Palms, south almost to the San Gorgonio Pass & Redlands and north beyond Victorville. It is difficult to exactly pinpoint boundaries for the Serrano due to a lack of reliable data, their sociopolitical organization, and their relationships with neighboring and related groups. The proposed project area is within these accepted tribal boundaries.

Kroeber noted that *Tahtam* was the name the Serrano gave to themselves (Kroeber 1978:617; Gatschet 1879). Kroeber also notes that each band of the tribe owned its own creek and an associated tract of land emphasizing the importance of water in this area for survival. Neighbors of the Serrano had 46 different appellations for them (Hodge 1907-1910). As their territory passes through lower Sonoran to Upper Sonoran, plant communities vary greatly as do the natural resources.

Beginning in 1814, the Serrano people were assimilated into Mission San Fernando. Then in 1819, an “asistencia” was built near Redlands and most of the Serrano left the area. Later in 1819-1834 they were physically recruited for the local missions. Many of the Serrano relocated to the Tejon area. Many of the Serrano were relocated onto two Indian Reservations in the Twentieth Century: Morongo and San Manuel.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## DISCUSSION

- a) No historic buildings exist in the main park of Saddleback Butte. There are several mining claims, but at this point it is unknown as to what type of mining they are associated. Despite the fact that isolated cultural resources have been found in the park, none of them are in the area of the proposed project.
- b) The region, the park unit, and the project area have a low-moderate degree of archaeological sensitivity and there are no recorded archeological sites in the park. The topography and the natural environment provided a setting for prehistoric occupation and land use. Construction activities associated with this project, including but not limited to ground disturbance and staging of equipment, would not pose significant impacts to known cultural resources. Integration of Cultural Conditions 1, -2, and -3 would reduce impacts to archaeological deposits to a less than significant level.

### **Cultural Condition -1**

- Any change in project scope, location, or footprint will be reviewed by a State Archaeologist prior to construction.
- Changes in the footprint or construction techniques, resulting in impacts outside the survey area, will be reviewed and approved in advance by a DPR archaeologist. Additional surveys (a field inventory and pre-construction testing) will be conducted as necessary prior to the start of work. The data generated from this investigation will determine if a data recovery plan or archaeological monitoring will be implemented.
- If archaeological monitoring were determined to be necessary during ground-disturbing activities, work will be conducted by and at the discretion of the DPR archaeologist assigned to the project. The archaeological monitor will be notified a minimum of two weeks prior to the start of ground-disturbing work to schedule monitoring, unless other arrangements have been made in advance.
- A report of the findings from the testing, data recovery, or monitoring will be completed and copies distributed to the Cultural Resource Division, California State Park Headquarters; the DPR Northern Service Center; The Southern Service Center, and the Tehachapi District.

A DPR archaeologist has recently surveyed the project area and found no archaeological resources in the project area. However, because of the natural ambiguity of archaeological resources (often located below the surface), the full extent of the cultural resources may not be known. Ground-disturbing activities proposed as part of the project could potentially impact unknown archaeological deposits in the APE. The following condition, combined with Cultural Condition 1 above, would reduce impacts to previously unidentified archaeological sites and features to a less than significant level.

### **Cultural Condition - 2**

- In the event that human remains are discovered, work will cease immediately in the area of the find and the project manager/site supervisor will notify the appropriate DPR personnel. Any human remains and/or funerary objects will be left in place. The DPR Sector Superintendent (or authorized representative) will notify the County Coroner, in accordance with §7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24 hours of the discovery if the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American. The NAHC will designate the “Most Likely Descendent” (MLD) of the deceased Native American. The MLD will recommend an appropriate disposition of the remains. If a Native American monitor is on-site at the time of the discovery and that person has been designated the MLD by the NAHC, the monitor will make the recommendation of the appropriate disposition.

- c) No human remains or burial sites have been documented in Saddleback Butte State Park. However, Native American human remains and artifacts were discovered less than a mile from the park property. Because Native American use of the area was extensive there is a potential of inadvertently discovering previously unknown burials. If any human remains or burial artifacts were identified, integration of **Cultural Condition 3** would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

### **Cultural Condition 3 - Human Remains**

- In the event that human remains are discovered, work would cease immediately in the area of the find and the project manager/site supervisor would notify the appropriate DPR personnel. Any human remains and/or funerary objects would be left in place or returned to the point of discovery and covered with soil. The DPR Sector Superintendent (or authorized representative) would notify the County Coroner, in accordance with 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Native American Heritage Commission (or Tribal Representative). If a Native American monitor were on-site at the time of the discovery, the monitor would be responsible for notifying the appropriate Native American authorities.  
If the coroner determines the remains represent Native American interment, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento and/or tribe would be consulted to identify the most likely descendants and appropriate disposition of the remains. Work would not resume in the area of the find until proper disposition is complete (PRC 5097.98). No human remains or funerary objects would be cleaned, photographed, analyzed, or removed from the site prior to determination.  
If it is determined the find indicates a sacred or religious site; the site would be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Formal consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and review by the Native American Heritage Commission/Tribal Cultural representatives would also occur as necessary to define additional site mitigation or future restrictions.

## **VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

### **Environmental Setting**

Saddleback Buttes State Park is in the Mojave Desert geomorphic province comprised of high desert and isolated mountains ranging from about 2000 ft in the valley and higher. The valley is triangular in shape bounded by hills, buttes, and ridges on the north and east sides, the Tehachapi Mountains on the northwest, and the San Gabriel Mountains on the southwest (Sneed and Galloway, 2000). This alluvium-filled valley is part of a desert basin with granitic ridges and buttes protruding (LACSD, 2005).

#### Topography

Antelope Valley is topographically a closed basin with surface run off ending in playas (Sneed and Galloway 2000). The elevation at Saddleback Buttes begins at 2600 ft and rises to 3651 at the highest point on the butte. The proposed project area will occur in the lower elevations of the park from 2650 ft to 2730 ft (see Figure G-1).

#### Slope Stability

The Department of Geological Survey indicates sections on the Saddleback Buttes as areas where potential occurrences of earthquake-induced landslide movement could occur due to local topography, geology, or subsurface water (CGS, 2003). These designated areas are approximately a mile away from the proposed project site. No portion of the park is designated as an earthquake-induced liquefaction zone (CGS, 2003).

#### Seismicity

There are a number of faults surrounding Saddleback Buttes. The closest known active fault is the Mirage Valley Fault; approximately 8.5 miles to the northeast. The Mirage Valley Fault shows evidence of displacement during late Quaternary time. There are two seismically active fault zones along the southwest and northwest boundaries of Antelope Valley. The historically active San Andreas Fault Zone (SAFZ), 15 miles southwest of the Park, is the transform boundary between the North American tectonic plate to the east and the Pacific tectonic plate to the west. The Holocene-age Llano Fault (only 7 kilometers in length) is located approximately 10 miles south of the Park. The Garlock Fault Zone to the northwest is approximately 40 miles from Saddleback Buttes and forms the boundary between the Mojave Block and the Sierra Nevada and Basin and Range provinces. The Garlock has not shown historic activity, but has been active in Holocene time (8 thousand years ago to present time).

#### Soils

The soils within Saddleback Buttes SP have formed from movement of loess, wind moving other fine sediments, and alluvial materials from the granitic peaks of the buttes (LACSD, 2005). The alluvium soil deposits in southern Antelope Valley are thought to be 800-900 ft deep (Sneed and Galloway, 2000). The entire park consists of the nine soil types listed in the following below. The portion of the park where the accessibility improvements are to be made, include Cajon loamy sand, Calvista-Hi Vista, Hesperia, and Rockland. Cajon loamy sand consists of very deep well drained soils that formed in sandy alluvium from dominantly granitic rocks. The soils are on alluvial fans, fan aprons, fan skirts, and inset fans. The soils are normally dry; during the wet season, December to March, they are moist but not for an

extended period of time (USDA, 2006a). The Calvista-Hi Vista complex consists of shallow well drained soils from granitic rock. These well drained soils are usually found on mountain ridges (USDA, 2006a). Hesperia loamy fine sand soils are also well drained. These dry soils are derived from granitic rock that formed alluvium deposits (USDA, 2006a).

Soil Series Name
Adelanto loamy sand, 2 to 5 percent slopes
Cajon loamy sand, 2 to 9 percent slopes
Cajon loamy fine sand, 9 to 15 percent slopes, hummocky
Calvista-Hi Vista complex, 2 to 9 percent slope
Calvista-Hi Vista rocky complex, 9 to 30 percent slopes
Dune land
Hesperia fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes
Hesperia loamy fine sand, 2 to 5 percent slopes
Rock land

(USDA 2006b)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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?

**DISCUSSION**

- a) The project site is located within the seismically-active Southern California Mojave region and while the chance of the rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground-shaking, or seismic-related ground failure are certainly possible in this area, this project would not substantially increase the exposure of people or structures to risk of loss, injury, or death as a result of these events.
- i) The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (APEFZ) as designated by the California Geological Survey (CGS 2000). Therefore, there is no expected impact from surface rupture due to this project.
- ii) The California Geological Survey has determined that the Mojave segment of the San Andreas Fault Zone is capable of generating an earthquake with a Maximum Moment Magnitude of 7.1. The last significant earthquake on this segment was the 1857 Fort Tejon Earthquake. The Garlock Fault (west segment) is capable of generating an earthquake with a Maximum Moment Magnitude of 7.1. Other faults in the area are also capable of generating strong earthquakes with magnitudes of 6.0 (Llano Fault) to 6.6 (Mirage Valley Fault), according to Caltrans (1996) The expected ground acceleration at the project site is on the order of 0.3g to 0.4g (Petersen 1999). This would result in moderate seismic shaking. However, there would be no increased risk to the public due to this project.
- iii) Seismic-induced ground failure, such as liquefaction, usually occurs in unconsolidated granular soils that are water saturated. During seismic-induced ground shaking, pore water pressure can increase in loose soils, causing the soils to change from a solid to a liquid state (liquefaction). In general, the soils within the Park are not considered to be susceptible to earthquake-induced liquefaction (CGS, 2003). A slight potential exists for liquefaction adjacent to stream channels if the water table is high (such as during parts of the years when these ephemeral streams carry water). Therefore there is a less than significant impact due to this project.
- iv) Landslides could occur in the steeper portions of the Park (CGS, 2003). However, this project is located in the flatter sections of the Park and landslides are not considered to be likely. Therefore, impacts are expected to be less than significant.
- b) A temporary increase in erosion may occur during construction of this project as a result of ground disturbing activities. Implementation of Condition GEO-1 below will reduce soil erosion or loss of topsoil by the proposed project to a less than significant level.

### **Geo Condition 1: Erosion Control**

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used in all areas to control soil and surface water runoff during any excavation and grading activities. Grading and excavation activities should not be planned during the rainy season (October 1 to May 1), but if storms are anticipated during construction or if construction must occur during the rainy season, “winterizing” will occur, including the covering (tarping) of any stockpiled soils and the use of temporary erosion control methods to protect disturbed soil.
- Temporary erosion control measures (BMPs) must be used during all soil disturbing activities and until all disturbed soil has been stabilized (recompacted, re-vegetated, etc.). DPR-approved BMPs, such as silt fences, fiber rolls, mulch or other applicable techniques will be utilized. Information on approved BMPs can be found in the Stormwater Best Management Practice Handbook for Construction, available on-line at [www.cabmphandbooks.com](http://www.cabmphandbooks.com). A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared if greater than one acre of ground disturbance will occur.
- Permanent BMPs for erosion control will consist of properly compacting disturbed areas. Areas that will not be paved or surfaced with soil stabilizers (areas not part of trails, parking or campsites), will be revegetated with native species using seed collected locally, where possible. If local seed is not available, a weed-free native mixture will be used. Final design plans will include permanent BMP measures to be incorporated into the project.

- c) This project is not located within geologic units or soils that are known to be unstable. Landslides and other slope stability problems are not anticipated. Trails, parking, and campsite/picnic areas will be graded to allow for storm water runoff that will not concentrate and create erosion or contribute to or create slope stability problems. Therefore impacts will be less than significant.
- d) The project area soils mapped by the US Department of Agriculture (2006) have a low to moderate shrink-swell potential. Therefore, there is a less than significant impact potential for expansive soils to be an issue on the project site.
- e) The project does not involve the installation of a septic system or leach field. Therefore, there is no impact due to this project.
- f) No known unique paleontological resources or geologic features exist within the project area. Therefore, there is no impact.

## VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

### Environmental Setting

#### Hazardous Materials

There has been no known industrial use in the project area that could have been a source of hazardous materials (EnviroStor, 2006).

#### Airports

The nearest airport is Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD), which is approximately 12 miles to the southwest. The Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), a department of the City of Los Angeles, is responsible for the operations and development of PMD. At this time there are no scheduled airline services available at PMD (PMD, 2006). As demand for airports within Los Angeles County grows, it is hoped that PMD will be able to accommodate the regional population needs.

#### Schools

There are no schools located within one-quarter mile of the project area. The closest school, Challenger Middle School, is located approximately 3.26 miles to the south on 170<sup>th</sup> St East in Lancaster.

#### Fire

The Saddleback Buttes State Park is rated as having moderate to high fire hazard severity (USGS, 2004). The high fire severity level was at the higher elevations on the buttes outside of the proposed project area. The Park's fire suppression needs are met by the CDF and the Los Angeles County Fire Department Station #114 (LACFD, 2005).

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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) Construction activities would require the use of certain potentially hazardous materials such as fuels, oils, or other fluids associated with the operation and maintenance of vehicles and equipment. These materials are generally contained within vessels engineered for safe storage. Large quantities of these materials would not be stored at or transported to the construction site. However, spills, upsets, or other construction-related accidents could result in a release of fuel or other hazardous substances into the environment. The following conditions would reduce the potential for adverse impacts from these incidents to a less than significant level.

<p><b>Hazmat Condition 1 – Spill Prevention and Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All equipment will be inspected by the contractor for leaks immediately prior to the start of construction, and regularly inspected thereafter until equipment is removed from park premises.</li> <li>▪ Prior to the start of construction, the contractor(s) and/or DPR will prepare an emergency Spill Prevention and Response Plan and maintain a spill kit on-site throughout the life of the project. This plan will include a map that delineates construction staging areas, where refueling, lubrication, and maintenance of equipment may occur. The Spill Prevention and Response Plan will be incorporated into a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan if it is determined that the project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction permit.</li> <li>▪ Equipment will be cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside of the park boundaries. All contaminated water, sludge, spill residue, or other hazardous compounds will be disposed of outside of park boundaries, at a lawfully permitted and authorized destination.</li> </ul>
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- b) There is a potential for hazardous substances to be released to the environment during the project from vehicle or equipment fluid spills or leaks. Implementation of the conditions



discussed above would reduce any risk to on-site workers, the public, or the environment to less than significant.

- c) As noted in the Environmental Setting, the nearest school is over three miles away from the proposed project site. There would be no significant impacts as a result of this project.
- d) No part of the park is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5. No area within the project site is currently restricted or known to have hazardous materials present. Therefore, no impact would occur within the project area.
- e, f) The Park is not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport, or in the vicinity of a private air strip. Palmdale Regional Airport is approximately 12 miles to the southwest of Saddleback Buttes. Therefore, no impact would occur as a result of this project.
- g) All construction activities would take place within the boundaries of Saddleback Buttes SP and work would not restrict access to, cause delays, or block any public road outside the immediate construction area. The traffic on East Avenue J and 170<sup>th</sup> Street East could be impacted for short periods of time for delivery of construction materials or construction equipment. The project would not conflict with the emergency response plans of Los Angeles County. Therefore, no impact will occur as a result of this project.
- h) The projected project site would include sections of dry desert grasses that would be flammable during the dry season (June – October). Motorized equipment can get very hot with extended use and would sometimes be in close proximity to flammable vegetation. Improperly outfitted exhaust systems or friction between metal parts and/or rocks could generate sparks, resulting in a fire. The following conditions would reduce the potential for adverse impacts from wildfire to a less than significant level:

<b>Hazmat Condition 2 – Fire Safety</b>
---

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prior to the start of construction, the Project Contractor will develop a DPR-approved Fire Safety Plan. The plan will include the emergency calling procedures for both CDF and the Los Angeles County Fire Department.</li><li>• Spark Arrestors or turbo charging (which eliminates sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers will be required for all motorized equipment and heavy equipment.</li><li>• Construction crews will be required to park vehicles away from flammable material, such as dry grass or brush. At the end of each workday, heavy equipment will be parked over mineral soil, asphalt, or concrete to reduce the chance of fire.</li></ul> |
|--|

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## VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

### Environmental Setting

#### Watershed

Saddleback Buttes State Park is located within the Antelope Valley Drainage Basin. The basin encompasses approximately 1,200 square miles of Los Angeles County (LADPW, 2006). A seasonal wash within Saddleback Buttes State Park conveys runoff following any precipitation. The annual rainfall on the valley floor of the Antelope Valley Drainage Basin ranges from 5 to 10 inches per year (DWR, 2003).

#### Flooding

Flooding is not a concern for Saddleback Buttes State Park. The entire park is outside of the FEMA 100-year floodplain (SDLAC, 2005).

#### Groundwater

The project area within Saddleback Buttes State Park is considered part of the Lancaster subbasin of the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin (USGS, 2000). The Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin underlies coalesced alluvial fans (Jalbert, 2006). The basin is bounded on the Northwest by the Garlock fault zone at the base of the Tehachapi Mountains and on the southwest by the San Andreas Fault zone at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains. The basin is bounded on the east by ridges, buttes, and low hills and in the north by Fremont Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR, 2003).

#### Water Quality

The Clean Water Act and the Environmental Protection Act provide federal protection for wetlands and waters of the United States. Responsibility for enforcing provisions of these acts lies with the federal Environmental Protection Agency, and is delegated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for enforcement. Regionally, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB) is responsible for surface and groundwater quality oversight. The LRWQCB Basin Plan (LRWQCB, 1994) has a category for Minor Surface Waters that would apply to the seasonal wash at Saddleback Buttes State Park. The Minor Surface Waters present or potential beneficial uses are: municipal and domestic water supply; agricultural supply; groundwater recharge; water contact recreational use; non-contact water recreational use; commercial and sport fishing; cold freshwater habitat; warm freshwater habitat; and wildlife habitat. These uses would not be applicable to the seasonal wash at Saddleback Buttes State Park. Stream channels are further protected under Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code.

#### Water Supply

The water supply for Saddleback Buttes State Park is provided by the Los Angeles County municipal water supply.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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) During any grading, excavation, or other ground-disturbing activities, a release of sediment to surface waters could occur. Other impacts to water quality could result from releases of fuels or other fluids from vehicles and equipment during the construction process. However, the project will be in compliance with all applicable water quality standards and waste discharge requirements as specified in the LRWQCB Basin Plan.

Integration of Hydro Condition 1 would control releases of pollutants in storm (or other) water runoff and result in a less than significant impact.

<b>Hydro Condition 1 – Water Quality</b>
--

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integration of Geo Condition 1 will provide BMPs to control erosion and runoff during project construction and post-construction.</li><li>• Integration of Hazmat Condition 1 will reduce impacts to water quality from possible pollutants (fuels and other vehicle fluids) released from vehicles and or other equipment during construction.</li></ul> |
|---|

- b) Although water application could be required during construction activities (e.g. for dust control), this demand would be minor and temporary, and would not substantially or permanently affect the groundwater level in the park. In addition, the water is supplied to the park by the L.A. County municipal water supply. This would not result in a substantial impact to the park's water supply or groundwater resource. Less than significant impact.
- c) The project area's existing drainage patterns would not be altered in a manner that would significantly increase on- or off-site erosion or siltation. In addition, BMP's for erosion would be integrated into the design and construction plans for this project, as described in Hydro Condition 1. Less than significant impact.
- d) The existing drainage patterns of the area would not be altered in a manner that would significantly increase the rate or amount of surface runoff to result in on- or off-site flooding. No impact.
- e) This project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. No substantial additional sources of polluted runoff are expected from this project, provided soil erosion BMP's are followed and a BMPS for spill prevention and response are in place for vehicle fluid spills or other construction fluids or materials. Refer to Condition Hydro 1 above.
- f) This project would not substantially degrade water quality to soil erosion and runoff or release of vehicle or equipment fluids if BMP's are implemented, as specified in Hydro Condition 1.
- g, h) Saddleback Buttes State Park is not within the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain. The project does not include any housing structures. No impact.
- i) The project would not expose people or property to an increased risk from flooding, including flooding resulting from the failure of a levee or dam. The Park is not within the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain, therefore there is no impact.
- j) The project area topography is relatively flat and not prone to landslides or mudflows. The project is not located in an area that would be inundated by either a seiche or a tsunami. Therefore, there is no impact due to this project.

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## IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING

### Environmental Setting

Saddleback SP is located in an unincorporated area of northern Los Angeles County. The county general plan land use element provides countywide policy for the general location and intensity of land use in the county. In addition, the county is split into 15 separate planning areas; Saddleback Buttes SP is located in the Antelope Valley Planning Area for which the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan was adopted in 1986. The area plans establish detailed standards and criteria tailored to conditions within the community and are consistent with the general countywide provisions.

The Countywide General Plan designates Saddleback Buttes as a *Significant Ecological Area* (SEA). The purpose of this designation is to maintain biological diversity by establishing boundaries which follow natural biological parameters, including habitats, linkages, and corridors, and have self-sustaining populations of their component species contained within each area (L.A. County GP, 1990)

Although this park does not have a General Plan, work to repair, replace, or rehabilitate existing facilities or to protect public health and safety are permitted under PRC § 5002.2 (c). All proposed work would occur within the boundaries of Saddleback Buttes SP.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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) No established community exists within the park boundaries. No impact.
- b) As noted in the Environmental Setting IX above, the proposed work would occur within the boundaries of Saddleback Buttes SP. No project elements are in conflict with the zoning, regulatory policies, land use plans conservation plans, or ordinances for this area. In addition, all appropriate consultations and permits would be acquired in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements. No impact.

- c) As stated in the Environmental Setting IX above, Saddleback Buttes SP is located in a County-designated *Significant Ecological Area*; however, no habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan is in effect in the park. No impact.



## X. MINERAL RESOURCES

### Environmental Setting

Located on the western edge of the Mojave Desert and in the broad alluvial plain of Antelope Valley, Saddleback Butte State Park is surrounded by lands rich in mineral resources. The State Mining and Geology Board (Board) maintains information regarding mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance. According to the Board, sites located in the greater Mojave region, surrounding the park, have been designated as having significant mineral resources for not only the greater Los Angeles and southern California area, but also the national and world economies.

Gold and silver deposits were discovered in the early 1800s, predating the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. Mineral commodities known to have been mined in both past and current times include 19 different metallic minerals such as gold, silver, zinc, lead and iron, and 27 non-metallic minerals such as gypsum, boron, sodium, and potash, to name a few.

Mineral Resource Zones are grouped by the State into four categories based on geologic factors, with Class 2 ("MRZ-2") lands having the greatest importance. Class 2 sites are underlain by demonstrated mineral resources considered important to the region or the state as a whole. There are two MRZ-2 sites identified in the area surrounding the City of Palmdale. Located in Little Rock Wash and the Big Rock Wash, sand and gravel are the primary resources that are mined in these areas for the purpose of aggregate use in construction activities (LACSD, 2005). Currently there are six mining operations (sand and gravel) located along Little Rock wash. Additionally, there are six concrete batching operations, three asphalt batching operations, and one concrete pipe manufacturer located in this area as well (CalTrans, 2001).

No significant mineral resources have been identified within the boundaries of Saddleback Butte State Park. According to Public Resource Code § 5001.65 commercial exploitation of resources in the units of the state park system is prohibited.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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, b) The project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource because no known mineral resource exists within the park boundaries. No impact.

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## XI. NOISE

### Environmental Setting

Noise is defined as unwanted sound and is known to have several adverse effects on people, including hearing loss, speech and sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Based on the known adverse effects of noise, the federal government, the State of California, and many local governments have established criteria to protect public health and safety and to prevent disruption of certain activities.

Noise is commonly described in “Ldn,” which expresses average sound level over a 24-hour period in decibels (dB), the standard measure of pressure exerted by sound. Federal, state, and local governments regulate different aspects of environmental noise. Federal and state agencies set noise standards for mobile sources, such as aircraft and motor vehicles, while local governments set standards for stationary sources, such as industrial facilities. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency has specified that 55 Ldn outside and 45 Ldn inside are the sound levels necessary to protect general health and welfare. Local regulation of noise is achieved through general plans and local noise ordinances.

Typical Noise Levels	
Type of Noise or Environment	Decibels
Threshold of Hearing	0
Soft Whisper	30
Normal Conversation	60-65
Car, at 20 mph, 25 ft away	65
Vacuum Cleaner 10 ft away	70
Backhoe	84-93
Front end loader	86-94
Hammer , Earthmover	87-95
Portable saw	88-102
Dump Truck at 50 mph 50 ft away	90
Earth Tamper ; Crane	90-96
Bulldozer	93-96
Gas leaf blower, 25 ft away	100
Helicopter 200 ft away	100
Stud welder	101
Jackhammer	102-111
Train horn 100 ft away	105
Jet takeoff 200 ft away	120
Shotgun at shooter's ear	140

Saddleback Buttes SP is located in Los Angeles County. The Noise Element of the Los Angeles County General Plan provides information regarding noise and general policy guidance, but does not contain any numerical standards for the compatibility between land uses and noise levels (Los Angeles County, 1974) For construction noise, the Noise Control Ordinance of Los Angeles County prohibits construction activities between weekday hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. or at any time on Sundays or holidays (Section 12.08.440, Part A) if it may cause a disturbance at a nearby residential or commercial property.

Saddleback Buttes SP features approximately 3000 acres of desert terrain and vegetation surrounding Saddleback Butte. The park is relatively undeveloped, includes a single trailer for employee housing, and offers a variety of passive activities including, hiking, day activities, equestrian use and camping.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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) As stated above, Los Angeles County does not have set numerical standards for the compatibility between land uses and noise levels. The County does; however, have construction noise limits. Noise generated by construction equipment could temporarily exceed this limit during active construction activities. Integration of **Noise Condition 1** below into construction plans will reduce temporary increased noise impacts to a less than

<b>Noise Condition 1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construction activities will generally be limited to the daylight hours, Monday – Friday; however, weekend work could be implemented to accelerate construction or address emergency or unforeseen circumstances. If weekend work is necessary, no work will occur on Saturday before 8:00 a.m. or after 6 p.m. and no work will occur on Sunday.</li> <li>▪ Internal combustion engines used for any purpose at the job site will be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. Equipment and trucks used for construction will utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g. engine enclosures, acoustically-attenuating shields, or shrouds, intake silencers, ducts, etc.) whenever feasible and necessary.</li> <li>▪ Stationary noise sources and staging areas will be located as far away from sensitive noise receptors as possible. If they must be located near sensitive receptors, stationary noise sources will be muffled to the extent feasible and/or, where practicable, enclosed within temporary sheds.</li> </ul>

significant level.

- b) Construction activity would not involve the use of explosives, pile driving, or other intensive construction techniques that could generate significant ground vibration or noise. Minor vibration immediately adjacent to backhoes and heavy equipment would only be generated on a short-term basis. Therefore, ground-borne vibration or noise generated by the project would have a less than significant impact.
- c) Once the proposed project is completed, all related construction noise would disappear. Nothing within the scope of the proposed project would result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Therefore, no impact.
- d) Construction noise levels at and near the project area would fluctuate, depending on the type and number of construction equipment operating at any given time, and would exceed ambient noise standards in the immediate vicinity of the work for brief periods of time. The distance from the single vacant staff residence to the proposed work sites is sufficient to prevent an objectionable level of noise. However, depending on the specific construction activities being performed, short-term increases in ambient noise levels could result in speech interference at the work site and a potential increase in annoyance to visitors and staff. As a result, construction-generated noise would be considered to have a potentially significant short-term impact to these people. Integration of **Noise Condition 1** into the project design and construction plans will reduce noise impacts to a less than significant level.
- e, f) This project is 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 these project activities.

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## XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

### Environmental Setting

Saddleback Buttes State Park, a rural park of approximately 3000 acres is located in the Antelope Valley in northern Los Angeles County. The County has the largest population (10,223,055 as of July 2005) of any county in the nation, and is exceeded by only eight states. Approximately one million of these people live in unincorporated areas which constitutes roughly 65 percent of the County land area (L.A. County, 2006).

Antelope Valley consists of 1200 square miles and includes the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster. Currently, growth rates in Antelope Valley exceed countywide growth rates. Much of the recent growth is attributed to the availability of open space and affordable housing in the area. The current population estimate of the valley, based on the 2000 census data, is 353,000 (SDLAC, 2005).

Housing within the park boundaries is limited to a single staff residence, which is currently vacant. (Kirschman, 2006). Staffing for the park is relatively static, with only one person in residence per year. This numbers is based on the DPR staffing requirements, and no significant growth is anticipated in the foreseeable future. The park is a recreational resource utilized by both locals and out-of-town visitors. No business or residential opportunities are offered within the park boundaries.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 have a housing component and all work will occur within the confines of the park boundary, with no additions or changes to the existing local infrastructure. It would neither modify nor displace any existing housing and would displace no one, either temporarily or permanently. Jobs are not expected to be generated as a result of this project therefore it would have no impact on population growth or housing.

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### XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

#### Environmental Setting

Los Angeles County is one of the nation's largest counties with 4,084 square miles, It has the largest population (10,223,055 as of July 2005) of any county in the nation, and is exceeded by only eight states. Approximately 28 percent of California's residents live in Los Angeles County.

There are 88 cities within the County, each with its own city council. All of the cities, in varying degrees, contract with the County to provide municipal services. Thirty-seven contract for nearly all of their municipal services. More than 65 percent of the County is unincorporated. County departments provide the municipal services (L.A. County, 2006).

The California Department of Forestry and Fire (CDF) has a legal responsibility to provide fire protection on all State Responsibility Lands. Saddleback Buttes SP is located on State Responsibility Lands. In support of its ground forces, the CDF emergency response air program includes several pieces of air attack equipment strategically placed throughout the state at 13 air attack bases and nine helitack bases (CDF, 2006). In addition to CDF, the Los Angeles County Fire Department services rural and remote areas of the County. The "Call" Firefighter program operates as first responders and are under the supervision and direction of Fire Captains at the nearest fully staffed Fire Station. Two stations are located in Lancaster, Fire Station 112 and Fire Station 117. Fire Station 112 is closest to Saddleback Buttes SP at approximately 9.7 miles away (L.A. County, 2006).

State Park Rangers are trained in Law Enforcement (Peace Officer Standards and training certified) and are responsible for watching over the park. The Sheriffs Department is responsible by charter, to provide municipal police services to the one million residents in the unincorporated communities throughout Los Angeles County (L.A. County Sherriff, 2006)

The Challenger Middle School, part of the Wilsona School District, is the closest school to the park, located approximately 3.26 miles away.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION**

The project proposes to increase accessibility at Saddleback Buttes State Park to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Fire Protection: Use of construction equipment around flammable annual vegetation presents an increased fire risk that could result in additional demands on L.A. County Fire teams. However, any impact on services would be temporary and nothing in the project scope would contribute to the need for an increase in the existing level of public service. Integration of Hazmat Condition 2 into construction plans, combined with the availability of on-site fire suppression equipment and support from State Park Rangers will reduce the potential impact on Fire Protection services to a less than significant level. Less than significant.

Police Protection: State Park Rangers with law enforcement authority patrol the park boundaries, police the public use areas and grounds, enforce the public resource code, and guard against misuse of park property and resources. The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department responds to emergency calls and assists with criminal investigations. The proposed project is not expected to result in any need for increased police services. No impact.

Schools: As stated in the Environmental Setting above, Challenger Middle School is located approximately 3.26 miles south of Saddleback Buttes SP on 170<sup>th</sup> Street. However, no elements of this project would result in an increased school enrollment in the area. No changes would occur that would require additional schools or school personnel. No impact.

Parks and Other Public Facilities: Work related to the proposed project could cause minor delays and inconveniences at park access points and around staging areas due to materials and equipment delivery. All areas under construction will be closed to park visitors; however, due to the seasonal use of these facilities and the temporary nature of construction the proposed project will not result in any significant adverse impact to park facilities or increased use at other parks in the area.

## XIV. RECREATION

### Environmental Setting

Principle activities in the Saddleback Buttes SP include camping, picnicking, hiking, photography, bird-watching, and other desert nature studies. Hunting and shooting are not permitted, and there are no roads, trails, or other facilities in the park for off-road vehicles. No off-road vehicle use is permitted in the park or surrounding area.

#### Hiking

A hiking trail of approximately 2.5 miles to the top of the Butte starts from below the day-use area, or visitors can hike about 2 miles from the trailhead parking area into the campground. The trails start off at a slight slope through mostly loose sand and creosote bushes to the base of the butte, then climb steeply- at the top, enjoy the 360° view over the Antelope Valley and east into the Mojave desert. Day-use fee applies.

#### Day-Use Facilities

Day-use facilities within the park include 27 picnic sites with tables and barbecue grills, each with structures for protection from the sun and wind. Water and pit toilets are located near the picnic area.

#### Camping

The family campground is first-come, first-served and offers 50 sites with tables, stoves, fire rings, and shade structures. Flush toilets and water are located throughout the campground. Eight people maximum per campsite; there is a 30-foot max for campers/RVs; and the group camp maximum is 30 people and 12 vehicles; reservations are required.

#### Equestrian Use

A 4.5 mile horse trail skirts the lower north and west portions of the butte. The trail is outlined by rock and a fence; horses must be kept within the designated trail and staging area. A 10-mile loop trip can be made by exiting at the saddleback Butte maintenance yard and continuing around the south and east sides of Saddleback Butte. Equestrian use is regulated to preserve the integrity of the park.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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,b) The proposed project would upgrade existing facilities within Saddleback Buttes SP to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Improvements are scheduled to occur over a four month time period starting in winter 2007.

This project would neither increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities nor would it include the construction or expansion of any recreational facilities. No impact.

## XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

### Environmental Setting

Traffic circulation at Saddleback Buttes State Park (SBSP) is largely confined to one main road that traverses the park from north to south on the eastern side of the park. At the south end is the entrance to the campground loop, at the northern terminus is the day use area and the Park Headquarters. There are an additional two entrances to the park, located on the western side of the park, however those entrances are rarely used and are by reservation only for use by horse groups (Bemis, 2006).

The park has two defined, 'main' entrance points, the campground and day use areas mentioned above as well as the 'by reservation only' equestrian entrances.

Located 17 miles east of the City of Lancaster, Saddleback Butte SP can be accessed by taking either East Avenue K or East Avenue J (from State Route 14) and driving eastward. Iron Rangers with fee envelopes are located at the day-use entrance off East Avenue J and 170th Street East, and at the campground entrance off East Avenue K and 170th Street East (CSP 2004).

Both East Avenue K and East Avenue J are utilized by residents who live in the areas surrounding the park as well as visitors to the park. There is no traffic count for just the eastern portions of both Avenues J and K, but rather the entire stretch of each road. The average traffic volume on Avenue J has recorded peak traffic volumes averaging 43,000 westbound vehicles and 48,000 eastbound vehicles; on Avenue K, peak traffic volumes average 73,000 westbound vehicles and 58,000 eastbound on weekday afternoons (CalTrans, 2006). The project would not require any closure of roads normally open to traffic and would not result in any traffic stops or delays.

There are two public airports within relatively close proximity to the park. Palmdale Regional Airport is located approximately 25 miles to the southwest of the park, accessible via Avenue P, in the city of Palmdale. The second public airport is the General William J. Fox Airfield, located 33 miles to the west of the park, accessible via West Avenue G.

There are no roads proposed for rehabilitation as a part of this project.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 will not cause a substantial increase in traffic along either E Avenue J or E Avenue K. No part of the project involves the closure of a section of road which might cause redirect to another road. No impact
- b) The project would not cause traffic levels to exceed, individually or cumulatively, the level of service standards for designated roads or highways because the level of traffic increase is extremely small. 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 or incompatible uses that would substantially increase traffic hazards. No impact.
- e) The project will not result in inadequate emergency access nor will the work disrupt normal emergency access to any portion of the park. No impact.
- f) The project would not result in inadequate parking capacity. The number of ADA compliant parking stalls will be increased as part of this project. Adequate parking exists in the nearby campground and day use areas and will only be altered, where needed, to make them ADA compliant. It is not anticipated that marked parking stalls will be used by construction crew workers. 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

Saddleback Buttes SP is located in northern Los Angeles County, approximately 17 miles east of the City of Lancaster.

The park is served by various public utility systems, with internal collection and distribution systems generally owned and/or maintained by park maintenance staff. Electricity for the park is provided by Southern California Edison with propane provided by Suburban Propane under contract. Commercial telecommunications are provided by Verizon. Waste Management provides solid waste collection services. Sewage treatment is provided via an existing DPR-owned and operated sewage treatment system (leachfields) within the park boundaries. The water supply for Saddleback Buttes State Park is provided by the Los Angeles County municipal water supply. (DuPont, 2006)

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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) Saddleback Buttes SP is located within the jurisdiction of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. The project would be in compliance with all applicable water quality standards and waste discharge requirements (see project **Hazmat Condition 1** regarding potential impact from accidents, spills, or upset). No impact.
- b) This project proposes to increase accessibility to the Day Use Area, campgrounds, and the Downen Nature Trail to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act with no construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of the park's existing facilities. No impact.
- c) The project scope does not include storm water drainage facilities and would neither increase nor alter existing conditions. No impact.
- d) Potable water is supplied for the park the Los Angeles Municipal Water supply. Less than significant impact.
- e) Wastewater treatment services (leachfields) are provided by DPR personnel with DPR owned and maintained facilities. No impact.
- f) As noted above in the Environmental Setting, solid waste disposal services are provided by Waste Management. The proposed project would not increase the park's solid waste disposal needs. No impact.
- g) The proposed project would comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations that relate to solid waste. No impact.



## 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>
<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>				
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on humans, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### DISCUSSION

- a) The proposed project was evaluated for potential significant adverse impacts to the natural environment and its plant and animal communities. The project site could support certain special status plants and animals. It has been determined that the project could have the potential to disturb Desert tortoise, Mojave ground squirrel, migratory bird species, American badger, Le Conte’s thrasher, burrowing owl, and Southern grasshopper mouse. However, full integration of the conditions and implementation of all mitigation measures incorporated into this project would reduce those impacts, both individually and cumulatively, to a less than significant level.
- b) The proposed project was evaluated for potential significant adverse impacts to the cultural resources of Saddleback Buttes SP and the immediate area. Although a DPR archaeologist recently surveyed the area and found no archaeological resources, ground disturbing activities could potentially impact unknown archaeological deposits. However, full integration of the conditions incorporated into this project would reduce those impacts, both individually and cumulatively, to a less than significant level.
- c) DPR often has smaller maintenance programs and rehabilitation projects planned for a park unit. However, no other projects, other than routine maintenance, are planned for the

proposed project area in the foreseeable future. Additionally, impacts from other environmental issues addressed in this evaluation do not overlap in such a way as to result in cumulative impacts that are greater than the sum of the parts. Less than significant impact.

- d) Most project-related environmental effects have been determined to pose a less than significant impact on humans. However, possible impacts from construction emissions (Air Quality), construction accidents, seismic events, and fire (Hazards and Hazardous Wastes), and noise, though temporary in nature, have the potential to result in significant adverse effects on humans. These potentially significant adverse impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level if all conditions are fully integrated into project design and construction documents.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

The following conditions will be integrated into design and construction plans and mitigation measures will be implemented by DPR as part of the Trail, Picnic Area, and Campground Accessibility Improvement Project at Saddleback Buttes State Park.

#### Air Quality

##### **Air Condition 1**

- All active construction areas will be watered at least twice daily during dry, dusty conditions.
- All trucks hauling soil, sand, or other loose materials on public roads will be covered or required to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
- All equipment engines will be maintained in good condition, in proper tune (according to manufacturer's specifications), and in compliance with all State and federal requirements.
- Excavation and grading activities will be suspended when sustained winds exceed 25 miles mph, instantaneous gusts exceed 35 mph, or dust from construction might obscure driver visibility on public roads.
- Earth or other material that has been transported onto paved streets by trucks, construction equipment, erosion, or other project-related activity will be promptly removed.

#### Biological Resources

##### **Mitigation Measures Bio-1 Desert Tortoise Avoidance**

- Prior to construction, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor with experience surveying for desert tortoise will survey for desert tortoise burrows.
- The surveys will be protocol-level surveys only if required by DFG and/or USFWS. Otherwise, they will be conducted for habitat suitability and for sign of desert tortoise activity indicating the species presence/absence in, or near, the project area.
- If active burrows are found within or near the project area, they will be flagged and avoided. If necessary, the trail will be re-routed to avoid burrows that go under the proposed alignment or could be otherwise impacted by project implementation.
- All construction personnel will be trained by a qualified biologist to recognize desert tortoise and to be aware of all avoidance measures.
- If surveys indicate presence of desert tortoise within the vicinity of the project site, a desert tortoise monitor will be onsite during all construction-related activities.
- No handling of desert tortoise will occur under any circumstances.

##### **Mitigation Measure Bio 2 – Mojave Ground Squirrel Avoidance**

- DPR will purchase credits in a mitigation bank near California City through the Desert Tortoise Protection Committee on a 2:1 ratio for all new project-related impacts to Mohave ground squirrel habitat.

- DPR will restore old trail segments with creosote bush scrub habitat using locally-native species and plant material collected locally.

### **Mitigation Measure Bio 3 – Migratory Bird Species**

- If construction-related activities are scheduled to begin during the nesting season of February 1 to August 31, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor will conduct a survey for nesting bird species within one week prior to the commencement of construction to identify the location(s) of active migratory bird nests. Surveys will include the project area and extend out 100 feet from the project area perimeter.
- A 100-foot buffer will be placed around each active nest. No construction-related activities will occur within this buffer area until young have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

### **Mitigation Measure Bio 4 – American Badger Avoidance**

- Prior to the start of construction, a DPR-qualified biologist or contractor will conduct a survey for American badger burrows.
- If badger burrows are present, they will be mapped and protected from project-related impacts during the nesting season of June 1 through October 15, or as negotiated with the California Department of Fish and Game.

### **Mitigation Measure Bio 5 – Le Conte’s Thrasher Avoidance**

- A DPR-qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for Le Conte’s thrasher during the nesting season of January through June 30.
- If Le Conte’s thrasher is observed nesting within 200 feet of the project area, DPR or its contractor will place a 200-foot buffer around the active nest. No construction-related activities will occur within the buffer area until the young have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

### **Mitigation Measure Bio 6 – Burrowing Owl Avoidance**

- A DPR-qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for burrowing owl burrows.
- If an active burrowing owl burrow is observed within 500 feet of the project area, DPR or its contractor will place a 500-foot buffer around the burrow. No construction-related impacts will occur within the buffer area as long as the burrow is being used by burrowing owls.

### **Mitigation Measure Bio 7 – Southern Grasshopper Mouse**

- All holes and trenches will be covered at the close of each working day with plywood or similar materials, or will include escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks to avoid trapping small mammals.

## Cultural Resources

### **Cultural Condition 1**

- Any change in project scope, location, or footprint will be reviewed by a State Archaeologist prior to construction.
- Changes in the footprint or construction techniques, resulting in impacts outside the survey area, will be reviewed and approved in advance by a DPR archaeologist. Additional surveys (a field inventory and pre-construction testing) will be conducted as necessary prior to the start of work. The data generated from this investigation will determine if a data recovery plan or archaeological monitoring will be implemented.
- If archaeological monitoring were determined to be necessary during ground-disturbing activities, work will be conducted by and at the discretion of the DPR archaeologist assigned to the project. The archaeological monitor will be notified a minimum of two weeks prior to the start of ground-disturbing work to schedule monitoring, unless other arrangements have been made in advance.
- A report of the findings from the testing, data recovery, or monitoring will be completed and copies distributed to the Cultural Resource Division, California State Park Headquarters; the DPR Northern Service Center; The Southern Service Center, and the Mojave Sector.

### **Cultural Condition 2**

- In the event that previously unknown cultural resources (including but not limited to dark soil containing shellfish, bone, flaked stone, groundstone, or deposits of historic trash) were encountered during project construction by anyone, the state representative would put work on hold at that specific location and contractors would be redirected to other tasks. A DPR-qualified archaeologist would record and evaluate the find and work with state representative to implement avoidance, preservation, or recovery measures as appropriate prior to any work resuming at that specific location.
- In the event that significant cultural resources were found in a project location, a qualified historian, archaeologist, and/or Native American representative (if appropriate) would monitor all subsurface work including trenching, grading, and excavations in that area from that point forward to ensure avoidance of significant impacts to cultural resources.

### **Cultural Condition 3 – Human Remains**

- In the event that human remains are discovered, work will cease immediately in the area of the find and the project manager/site supervisor will notify the appropriate DPR personnel. Any human remains and/or funerary objects will be left in place. The DPR Sector Superintendent (or authorized representative) will notify the County Coroner, in accordance with §7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24 hours of the discovery if the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American. The NAHC will designate the “Most Likely Descendent” (MLD) of the deceased Native American. The MLD will recommend an appropriate disposition of the remains. If a Native American monitor is on-site at the time of the discovery and that person has been designated the

MLD by the NAHC, the monitor will make the recommendation of the appropriate disposition.

## Geology and Soils

### **Geo Condition 1- Erosion Control**

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used in all areas to control soil and surface water runoff during any excavation and grading activities. Grading and excavation activities should not be planned during the rainy season (October 1 to May 1), but if storms are anticipated during construction or if construction must occur during the rainy season, “winterizing” will occur, including the covering (tarping) of any stockpiled soils and the use of temporary erosion control methods to protect disturbed soil.
- Temporary erosion control measures (BMPs) must be used during all soil disturbing activities and until all disturbed soil has been stabilized (recompacted, re-vegetated, etc.). DPR-approved BMPs, such as silt fences, fiber rolls, mulch or other applicable techniques will be utilized. Information on approved BMPs can be found in the Stormwater Best Management Practice Handbook for Construction, available on-line at [www.cabmphandbooks.com](http://www.cabmphandbooks.com). A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared if greater than one acre of ground disturbance will occur.
- Permanent BMPs for erosion control will consist of properly compacting disturbed areas. Areas that will not be paved or surfaced with soil stabilizers (areas not part of trails, parking or campsites), will be revegetated with native species using seed collected locally, where possible. If local seed is not available, a weed-free native mixture will be used. Final design plans will include permanent BMP measures to be incorporated into the project.

## Hazards and Hazardous Materials

### **Hazmat Condition 1 – Spill Prevention and Response**

- All equipment will be inspected by the contractor for leaks immediately prior to the start of construction, and regularly inspected thereafter until equipment is removed from park premises.
- Prior to the start of construction, the contractor(s) and/or DPR will prepare an emergency Spill Prevention and Response Plan and maintain a spill kit on-site throughout the life of the project. This plan will include a map that delineates construction staging areas, where refueling, lubrication, and maintenance of equipment may occur. The Spill Prevention and Response Plan will be incorporated into a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan if it is determined that the project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction permit.
- Equipment will be cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside of the park boundaries. All contaminated water, sludge, spill residue, or other hazardous compounds will be disposed of outside of park boundaries, at a lawfully permitted and authorized destination.

### **Hazmat Condition 2 – Fire Safety**

- Prior to the start of construction, the Project Contractor will develop a DPR-approved Fire Safety Plan. The plan will include the emergency calling procedures for both CDF and the Los Angeles County Fire Department.
- Spark Arrestors or turbo charging (which eliminates sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers will be required for all motorized equipment and heavy equipment.
- Construction crews will be required to park vehicles away from flammable material, such as dry grass or brush. At the end of each workday, heavy equipment will be parked over mineral soil, asphalt, or concrete to reduce the chance of fire.

## Hydrology and Water Quality

### **Hydro Condition 1 – Water Quality**

- Integration of Geo Condition 1 will provide BMPs to control erosion and runoff during project construction and post-construction.
- Integration of Hazmat Condition 1 will reduce impacts to water quality from possible pollutants (fuels and other vehicle fluids) released from vehicles and or other equipment during construction.

## Noise

### **Noise Condition 1**

- Construction activities will generally be limited to the daylight hours, Monday – Friday; however, weekend work could be implemented to accelerate construction or address emergency or unforeseen circumstances. If weekend work is necessary, no work will occur on Saturday before 8:00 a.m. or after 6 p.m. and no work will occur on Sunday.
- Internal combustion engines used for any purpose at the job site will be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. Equipment and trucks used for construction will utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g. engine enclosures, acoustically-attenuating shields, or shrouds, intake silencers, ducts, etc.) whenever feasible and necessary.
- Stationary noise sources and staging areas will be located as far away from sensitive noise receptors as possible. If they must be located near sensitive receptors, stationary noise sources will be muffled to the extent feasible and/or, where practicable, enclosed within temporary sheds.

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## **Chapter 7 Report Preparation**

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APPENDIX A  
**MAPS, TABLES, AND CHARTS**

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## U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE – VENTURA FISH & WILDLIFE OFFICE

### SPECIES LIST

Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Date Listed	CH	CH Date	Occurs In
Amphibian	Arroyo Toad	<i>Bufo microscaphus californicus</i>	Endangered	12-16-94	Yes	4-13-05	LA, MNT, SBA, VEN
Amphibian	California Red-Legged Frog	<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i>	Threatened	5-23-96	Yes	4-13-06	LA, MNT, SBA, SBD, SBE, SCZ, SLO, VEN
Bird	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Threatened	5-11-67	No		INY, LA, MNO, MNT, SBE, SBR, SCZ, SLO, SBA, VEN
Bird	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelicanus occidentalis</i>	Endangered	6-2-70	No		MNT, SCZ, SLO, SBA, VEN
Bird	California Condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	Endangered	3-11-67	Yes	9-22-77	KRN, LA, MNT, SLO, SBA
Bird	California Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila californica</i>	Threatened	3-30-93	Proposed		LA, VEN
Bird	California Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>	Endangered	6-2-70	No		LA, MNT, SBA, SLO, VEN
Bird	Least Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	Endangered	5-2-86	Yes	2-2-94	INY, KRN, LA, SBA, SBD, SBE, SCZ, SLO, VEN
Bird	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax trallii extimus</i>	Endangered	2-27-95	Yes	7-22-97	INY, KRN, LA, SBA, SBD, LA
Bird	Western Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>	Threatened	3-5-93	Proposed		LA, MNT, SBA, SLO
Bird	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Candidate	7-25-01	No		INY, KRN, LA, MNO, MNT, SBA, SBD, SBE, SCZ, SLO, VEN
Fish	Southern California Steelhead	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Endangered	6-17-98	Proposed		LA, MNT, SBA, SLO, VEN
Fish	Tidewater Goby	<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	Endangered	3-7-94	No		LA, MNT, VEN, SBA, SCZ, SLO
Fish	Unarmored Threespine Stickleback	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni</i>	Endangered	10-13-70	No		LA, SBA, VEN
Invertebrate	Quino Checker-Spot Butterfly	<i>Euphydryas editha quino</i>	Endangered	1-16-97	No		LA
Invertebrate	Riverside Fairy Shrimp	<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>	Endangered	8-3-93	Yes	5-30-01	LA
Mammal	San Joaquin Kit Fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis</i>	Endangered	3-11-67	No		MNT, SBA, SBE, SLO

		mutica					
Plant	Braunton's Milk-vetch	Astragalus brauntonii	Endangered	1-27-97	Proposed	11-10-05	LA, VEN
Plant	California Orcutt Grass	Orcuttia californica	Endangered	8-3-93	No		LA, SBA, SLO, VEN
Plant	Conejo Dudleya	Dudleya abramsii ssp. parva	Threatened	1-29-97	No		LA, VEN
Plant	Lyon's Pentachaeta	Pentachaeta lyonii	Endangered	1-29-97	Proposed	11-10-05	LA, VEN
Plant	Marcescent Dudleya	Dudleya cymosa ssp. marcescens	Threatened	1-29-97	No		LA, VEN
Plant	Nevin's Barberry	Berberis nevinii	Endangered	10-13-98	No		LA
Plant	Slender-horned Spineflower	Dodecahema (=Centrostegia) leptoceras	Endangered	9-28-87	No		LA, VEN
Plant	Spreading Navarretia	Navarretia fossalis	Threatened	10-13-98	Proposed	10-7-04	LA
Plant	Verity's Dudleya	Dudleya verityi	Threatened	1-29-97	No		VEN, LA
Reptile	Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard	Gambelia silus	Endangered	3-11-67	No		LA, SBA, SBD, SBE, SLO, VEN
Reptile	Desert Tortoise	Gopherus agassizii	Threatened	4-2-90	Yes	2-8-94	INY, KRN, LA, SBD
<b>**Unofficial**</b>							

**CNPS List of Potentially-Occurring Special-Status Plant Species  
in the Hi Vista 7.5-minute Quadrangle Map Area**

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>CNPS<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Federal</b>
<i>Astragalus preussii</i> var. <i>laxiflorus</i>	Lancaster milk-vetch	1B.1	None	None
<i>Calochortus striatus</i>	Alkali mariposa lily	1B.2	None	None
<i>Cryptantha clokeyi</i>	Clokey's cryptantha	1B.1	None	None
<i>Cymopterus deserticola</i>	Desert cymopterus	1B.2	None	None
<i>Eriophyllum mohavense</i>	Barstow woolly sunflower	1B.2	None	None
<i>Loeflingia squarrosa</i> var. <i>artemisiarum</i>	Sagebrush loeflingia	2.2	None	None
<i>Plagiobothrys parishii</i>	Parish's popcorn-flower	1B.1	None	None

<sup>1</sup> California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Lists: List 1A = presumed extinct in California; List 1B = rare or endangered in California and elsewhere; List 2 = rare or endangered in California, more common elsewhere; List 3 = need more information; List 4 = plants of limited distribution. New threat code extensions are: .1 = seriously endangered in California; .2 = fairly endangered in California; and .3 not very endangered in California.

SE = State Endangered; ST = State Threatened; SR = State Rare; FE = Federally Endangered; FSC = Federal Special Concern

**List of Special-Status Wildlife Species with CNDDDB Occurrences  
in the Hi Vista 7.5-minute Quadrangle Map Area**

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Present at SBSP?</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Federal</b>
<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	Desert tortoise	Yes	ST	FT
<i>Spermophilus mohavensis</i>	Mohave ground squirrel	Yes	ST	None
<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Prairie falcon	Not known to be	SC	None
<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>	Le Conte's thrasher	Not known to be	SC	None

SE = State Endangered; ST = State Threatened; SR = State Rare; SC = DFG Species of Special Concern; FE = Federal Endangered; FT = Federal Threatened; FSC = Federal Special Concern

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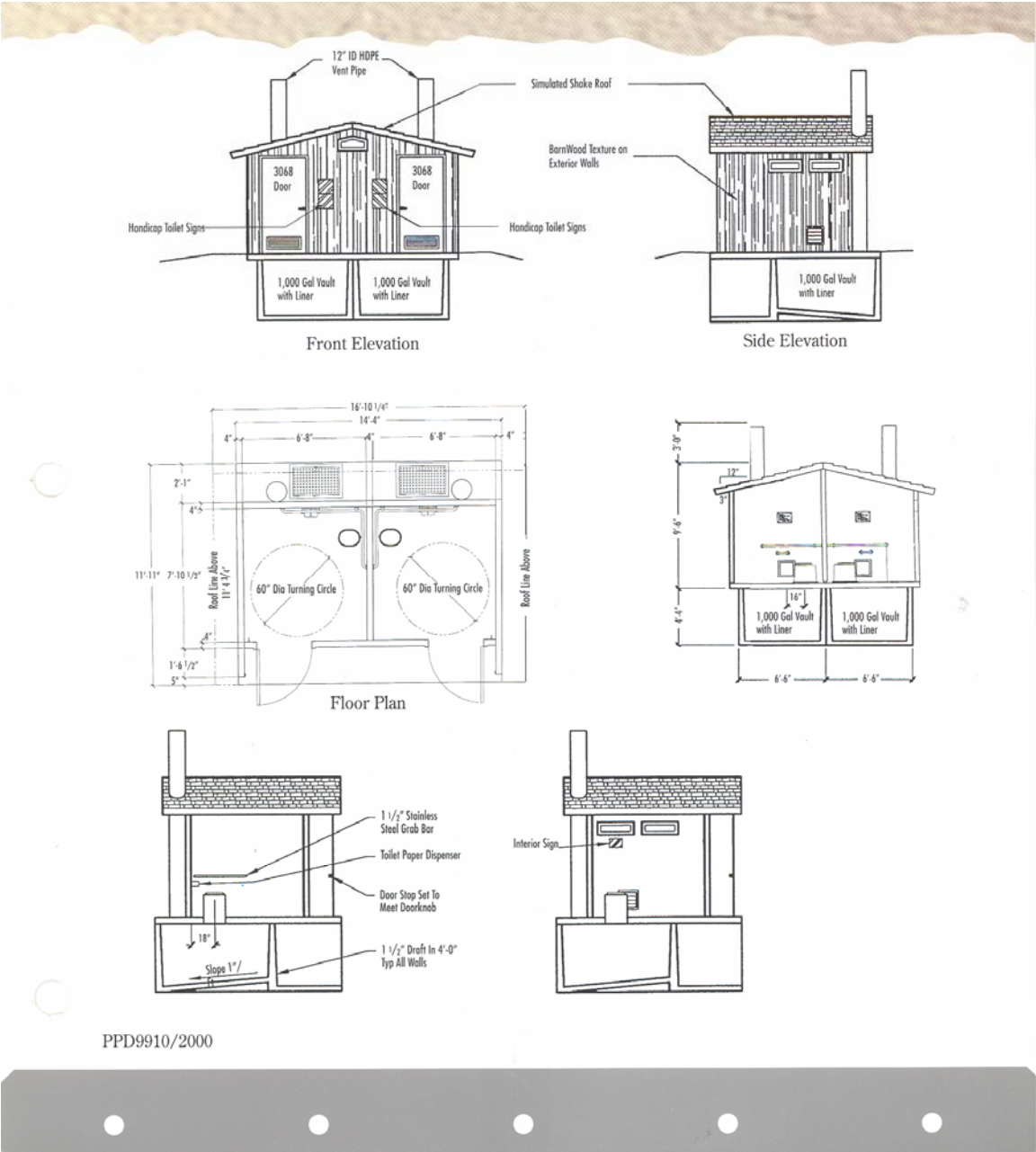
APPENDIX B

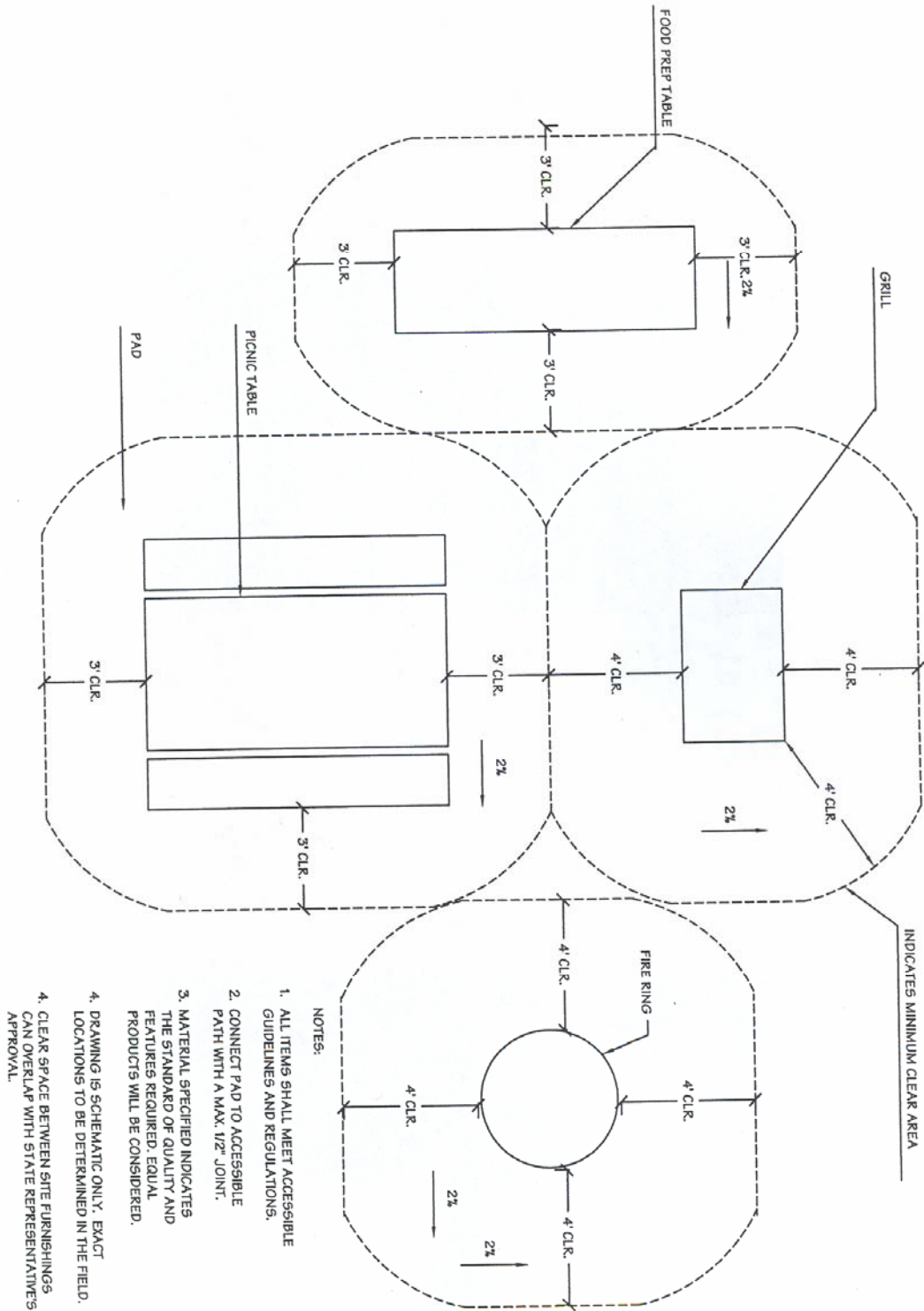
# PROJECT DESIGN GRAPHICS

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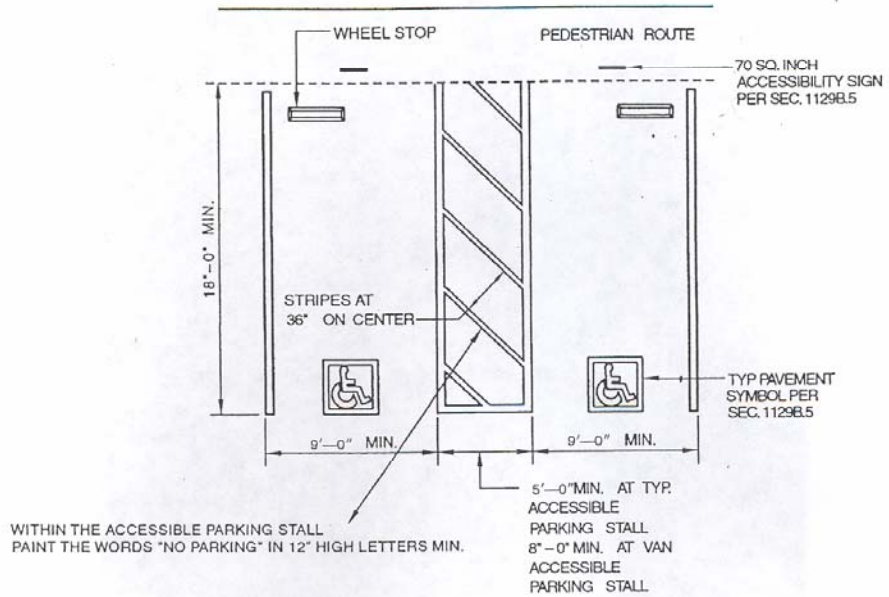
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## Campsite Layout – Required Space around furniture



THIS DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATES THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THESE REGULATIONS AND IS INTENDED ONLY AS AN AID FOR BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION.

FIGURE 11B-18A—DOUBLE PARKING STALLS

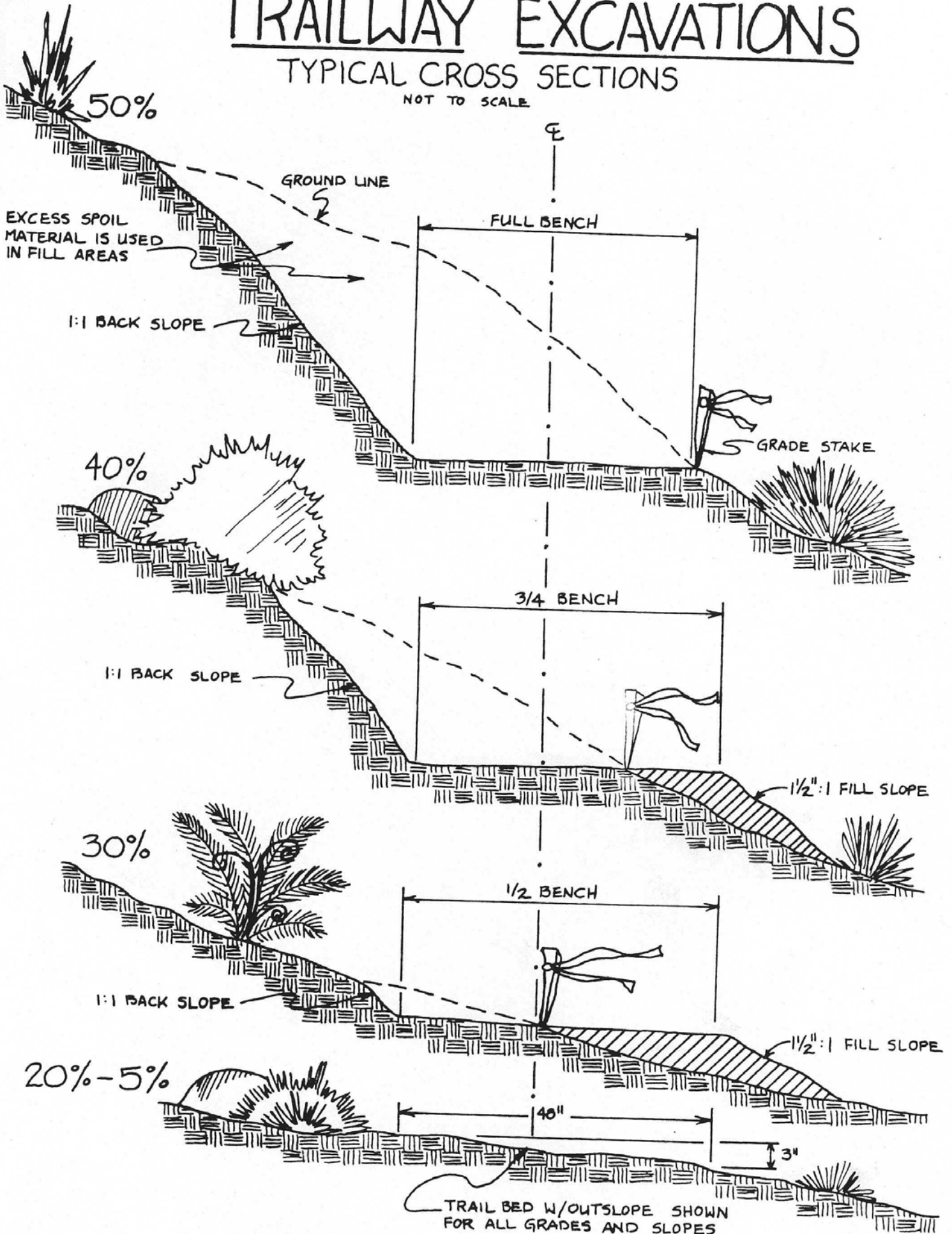
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FEBRUARY 28, 2003 ERRATA

# TRAILWAY EXCAVATIONS

## TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

NOT TO SCALE



NOTE: AMOUNT OF BENCH VARIES LINEARLY W/% OF SIDE SLOPE. ALL GRADE STAKES INDICATE GRADE AT MINERAL SOIL. ALL FILL TO BE MINERAL SOIL W/NO VEGETATION DEBRIS.

APPENDIX C  
**Acronyms**

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## Appendix C Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect
APEFZ	Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning
ARB/CARB	California Air Resources Board
AVAPCD	Antelope Valley Air Pollution Control District
AVAQMD	Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
AVIM	Antelope Valley Indian Museum
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CA	California
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDF	California Department of Forestry and Fire
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database (Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game)
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CSP	California State Parks
CSQA	California Storm Water Quality Association
dB	decibel
DFG	California Department of Fish and Game
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPR	California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks)
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substance Control
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
ft	Feet
GP	General Plan
IS/MND	Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration
L.A.	Los Angeles
LAC	Los Angeles County
LACFD	Los Angeles County Fire Department
LACSD	Los Angeles County Sanitation District
LADPW	County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
LAWA	Los Angeles World Airport
Ldn	average sound
LF	Linear Feet
LRWQCB	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
MDAB	Mojave Desert Air Basin
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration

mph	miles per hour
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
NCRWQCB	North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
PM <sub>10</sub>	particulate matter (particles with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 Microns or less)
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	particulate matter (particles with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 Microns or less)
PMD	Palmdale Regional Airport
PRC	Public Resources Code
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SAFZ	San Andreas Fault Zone
SBSP	Saddleback Buttes State Park
SDLAC	Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
SEA	Significant Ecological Area
SP	State Park
sq	square
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
U.S.	United States
USACOE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDI-BLM	United States Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Service
VRP	Visibility Reducing Particle