Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 Project

Draft
Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Coachella Valley Water District
75-515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, California 92211

September 2021

PREFACE

This **Initial Study (IS) / Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)** analyses the potential environmental impacts associated with Coachella Valley Water District's (CVWD's) proposal to construct and operate two 1,000,000-gallon (1MG) aboveground domestic water reservoir tanks in the unincorporated community of Indio Hills, Riverside County, California. These proposed welded-steel tanks would replace the two existing 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks which are old, have developed moderate-to-severe corrosion along their bolt seams, and are generally unreliable due to general deterioration and minor leaks.

This IS/MND has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the 2021 CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.), and CVWD's Local CEQA Guidelines.

CVWD is the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15367. CVWD has prepared this IS to evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed Project and to disclose to the public and decision makers the potential environmental effects of implementation of the proposed Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 describes the requirements for an IS and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15070-15075 describe the process for the preparation of an MND. This IS/MND contains all of the contents required by CEQA, which includes a stable project description, a description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures for any potentially significant impacts, an evaluation of consistency with land use plans and policies, and a list of preparers.

This IS/MND evaluates the potential for environmental impacts to resource areas identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

Additionally, the proposed Project may receive funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Program; therefore, the proposed Project is also subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 7 Code of Federal

Regulations (CFR) Part 1970, *Environmental Policies and Procedures*, and Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*. As such, this IS/MND has been expanded and formatted to include a discussion of items listed on the USDA RUS Environmental Report (ER) Checklist for Projects with a CEQA Document.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15073, this Draft IS/MND has been published and circulated for a 30-day public review period to all relevant Federal, State, and local agencies as well as interested organizations and individuals. A copy of the Draft IS/MND is available for review at: www.cvwd.org

Written comments should be submitted to CVWD by 5:00 p.m. on October 29, 2021. Please submit written comments to:

William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor
Coachella Valley Water District
75-515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, California 92211

Following the 30-day public review period, CVWD will evaluate all written comments received on the Draft IS/MND and will determine if the preparation of a Final IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) is appropriate. CVWD's Board of Director's will consider adopting the Final IS/MND and MMRP, in compliance with CEQA, at a publicly noticed meeting. CVWD's Board of Director meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

1. **PROJECT:** Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 Project

2. **LEAD AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:**
Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), 75-515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, California 92211. William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor. Phone: 760-398-2651 and Email: WPatterson@cvwd.org.

3. **PROJECT LOCATION:** CVWD's service area comprises approximately 1,000 square miles in the Coachella Valley within Riverside County and portions of Imperial and San Diego counties. The Project site is located in the northwest portion of CVWD's service area within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills, Riverside County, California approximately 0.5 miles north of the intersection of 30th Avenue and Sunny Rock Road. The Project site is located within the southwest corner of Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 750-130-005, a 3.67-acre, CVWD-owned property located within a portion of Section 11, Township 4 south, Range 7 east, San Bernardino Base and Meridian.

4. **GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** The Land Use Element of Riverside County's General Plan includes the unincorporated community of Indio Hills within the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan Boundary (County of Riverside 2019a, 2019b). Indio Hills is an expansive but sparsely developed, rural residential enclave located along Dillon Road, east of Thousand Palms Canyon Road, on the northeast edge of the Coachella Valley Preserve. Land use within the community is generally limited to *Rural Residential*. *Commercial* and *Industrial* land uses are located to the southwest in the unincorporated communities of Thousand Palms and Sun City Palm Desert. Land use on the Project site is designated as *Open Space-Rural (OS-RUR)* (County of Riverside 2019b). The *OS-RUR* designation is applied to remote, privately owned open space areas with limited access and a general lack of public services. The Project site is bordered by *Open Space-Conservation (OS-C)* to the east (County of Riverside 2019b), which has been designated a *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* under the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) (CVAG 2019; see Section 7, *Surrounding Land Uses*).

5. **ZONING:** The Project site is zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)*. Pursuant to Section 15.1(E)(1) of the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 348), this zoning designation provides for the conservation of water and development of water storage and distribution infrastructure, such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells, and necessary pumping and water production facilities (County of Riverside County of Riverside 2019c).

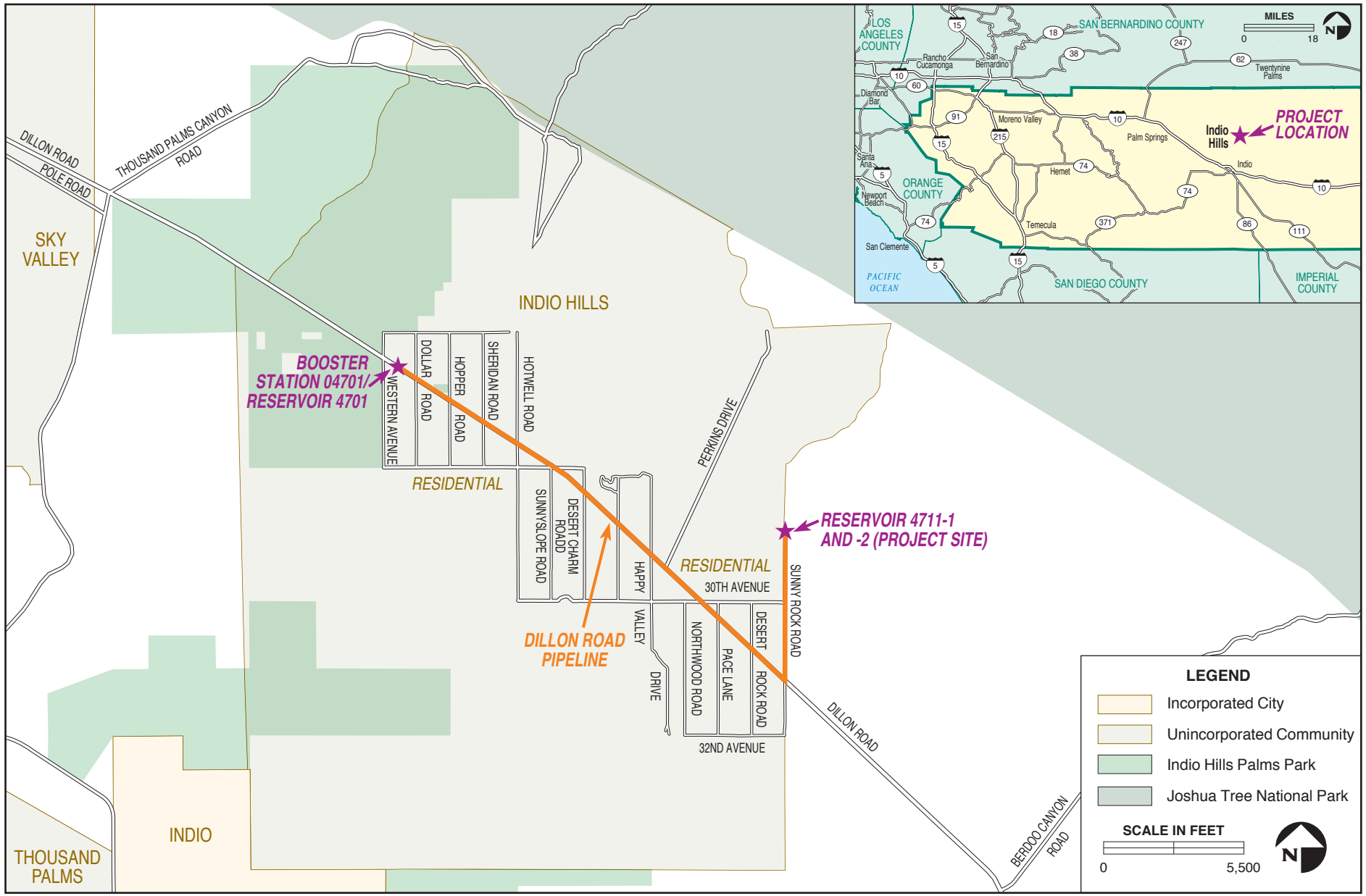
6. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Under the proposed Project, CVWD would construct two 1MG aboveground welded-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4) and subsequently demolish the existing 100,000-gallon aboveground bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2), which were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999. The proposed Project would restore and improve water storage infrastructure and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone, which serves the unincorporated community of Indio Hills.

The construction of the proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would include the following components:

- Excavation, grading, soil compaction, and construction of two 76-foot diameter by 5-foot deep foundations;
- Construction of two 1MG welded-steel tanks;
- Construction of all required aboveground and buried appurtenances (e.g., water meters, valves, 18-inch diameter connection to the existing Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline, etc.); and
- Construction of all required infrastructure, including a riprap revetment (i.e., berm) north/upstream of the new reservoirs, perimeter chain-link fence, etc.

Following the construction and initial operation of proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4, the two existing bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2) and associated appurtenances and infrastructure would be demolished and removed from the Project site. This demolition would include the removal of existing aboveground meters, valves, and pipelines as well as the existing riprap revetment and perimeter chain-link fence. The buried pipelines associated with the existing tanks may be removed or abandoned in place.

Each of these components of the proposed Project are described in further detail below in *Proposed Project Components*.



wood.

Regional Vicinity

FIGURE 1

Environmental Setting

The Project site is located on a broad alluvial fan south of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Elevations range at the Project site from approximately 1,140 to 1,380 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Soils in the area are comprised of well-drained Carrizo stony sand (2- to 9-percent slopes) (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2020). The Project site is located within the Whitewater River watershed and is traversed by ephemeral streambed channels (see Section 14.4, *Biological Resources* and Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*). These ephemeral streambed channels are generally dry throughout the year but convey water from upstream areas during storm events (WEST Consultants, Inc. 2020).

The Project site is currently developed with existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2. These tanks would be demolished following construction and initial operation of the proposed 1MG Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4.

The Project site was included in the Biological Survey Report prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015a), which included a habitat survey conducted on July 9, 2015. CVWD has conducted numerous site visits associated with the proposed Project – including the most recent site visits on February 5, 2020 and May 6, 2020 – and confirmed that the vegetation at the Project site has not measurably changed since 2015 (Personal Communication with Brett Daniels, CVWD Biologist). Additionally, at the request of USDA, a Project-specific biological survey was conducted on January 8, 2021 (see Appendix B). Dominant plant species at the Project site include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), burrowbrush (*Ambrosia dumosa*), burro weed (*Ambrosia salsola*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*), and Mojave rabbitbrush (*Ericameria paniculata*). The only vertebrate species / sign noted during the field visits were mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), Say's phoebe (*Savomis saya*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*). Desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*) nests, and coyote (*Canis latrans*) tracks and scat were also observed (Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. [Wood] 2021a). However, other wildlife commonly found in this setting include desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), desert iguana (*Dipsosaurusdors alis*), and common chuckwalla (*Sauromalus ater*), raven (*Corvus corax*), and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) (CVWD 2015a; see Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*).

As described further in Section 7, *Surrounding Land Uses*, the Project site is located adjacent to the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* and *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* under the CVMSHCP (CVAG 2019). However, the Project site generally has a high level of disturbance due to the initial development of Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 as well as routine operations, inspections, and maintenance of the existing tanks.

Existing Development

Access to the exiting Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 is provided by an unnamed, unpaved, and gated access road.

As described in Section 3, *Project Location*, the Project site is located approximately 0.5 miles north of the intersection of 30th Avenue and Sunny Rock Road. Access into the Project site is provided by an unpaved and gated road located off of Sunny Rock Road.

The Project site is currently developed with two 35-foot diameter, 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks, Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2, and associated appurtenances and infrastructure, including an existing riprap revetment (i.e., berm) and perimeter chain-link fence. Water is conveyed to Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 from the northwest through approximately 13.5 miles of buried waterline, including the 18-inch Dillon Road Transmission Line, which was installed in 2017 to replace an 8-inch diameter asbestos cement (AC) transmission line from Booster Station 04701 / Reservoir 4701 to Reservoir 4711 (refer to Figure 1). The existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 are the end-of-line water storage for the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone and serves customers within the Indio Hills Domestic Water Pressure Zone. Over time, the two existing tanks, which were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999, have developed moderate-to-severe corrosion along their bolt seams, as described in CVWD's *Reservoir Prioritization Report (2016)*. These existing bolted-steel tanks no longer provide reliable water storage due to this general deterioration and minor leaks. CVWD's preliminary economic analysis determined that that replacing the existing tanks with new welded-steel tanks would be more cost effective than rehabilitating the existing tanks.

Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 are located on CVWD-owned land within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. The Project site and surrounding area is designated as Open Space-Rural*, which is applied to remote, privately owned open space areas with limited access and a lack of public services.*

The construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would improve water storage and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Indio Hills Domestic Water Pressure Zone.

Proposed Project Components and Construction Details

Construction of the Proposed Aboveground Reservoir Tanks

The proposed construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would begin with excavation, grading, soil compaction, and construction of two 76-foot diameter by 5-foot deep foundations, which would result in a total footprint of approximately 4,536 square feet (sf). The preliminary locations of these foundations would be located to the northwest of the existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 in the southwestern corner of APN 750-130-005. The total area of grading would include approximately 1.5 acres and would involve leveling of the area surrounding the proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 to support access for future routine inspection and maintenance activities.

The two 1MG welded-steel tanks would be constructed to a height of approximately 43 feet (approximately 27 feet taller than the existing tanks). Each of the welded-steel tanks would include secured, exterior stairs and a 36-inch square roof hatch. Similar to the existing bolted-steel tanks, the proposed welded-steel tanks would be painted a neutral brown or tan to blend into the existing visual environment (see Section 14.1, *Aesthetics*). The tanks would be connected to the existing water distribution network on the Project site with a buried 18-inch diameter ductile iron pipe. The proposed pipeline would tie into the existing 18-inch Dillon Water Transmission Pipeline located immediately adjacent to the west of the existing perimeter fenceline around Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2.

The existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 are protected from flash flooding by a 175-foot long riprap revetment. The proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would be located to the north (i.e., “upstream”) of this revetment; therefore, CVWD would install a new riprap revetment to the north of the proposed tanks to provide flood protection. As described further in Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, Wood prepared an 8-Step Floodplain Analysis which determined that the 100-year flow approaching the revetment would be approximately 779 cubic feet per second (cfs) with a flow depth of 1.14 feet (Wood 2021c; see Appendix F). The riprap revetment would be constructed to provide at least 1 foot of freeboard and would involve approximately 278 cubic yards (cy) of grading, including the use of boulders and other materials from the existing riprap revetment.

Demolition of Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2

Following the construction and initial operation of the proposed tanks and associated appurtenances, the existing bolted-steel Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 would be deconstructed and removed. This would include the removal of the existing aboveground meters, valves, and pipelines as well as the existing riprap revetment and approximately 450-feet linear feet of perimeter chain link fencing. The buried pipelines associated with the existing tanks may be removed or abandoned in place. The demolished steel, concrete, and other debris would be hauled off-site to a recycling facility or a construction-and-demolition debris landfill. Following the completion of demolition activities, the footprint of the existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 would be regraded and planted with native vegetation cover to prevent the establishment and spread of invasive species consistent with CVWD’s *Operations & Maintenance Manual*.

During construction, the Project site would be accessed from Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, and Sunny Rock Road. Access into the Project site would be provided by the unnamed, unpaved, and gated

access road located at the northern end of Sunny Rock Road (see Figure 2). CVWD's engineers have determined that this access is suitable for heavy haul trucks (e.g., dump trucks, flat-bed materials delivery trucks, etc.). Therefore, no improvements to this access (e.g., re-grading, addition of gravel, paving, etc.) would be necessary. Construction staging areas and materials laydown areas would be located on the Project site within previously graded and disturbed areas associated with the existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 as well as areas that are proposed for grading under the proposed Project. In total, proposed construction and demolition activities would disturb an approximately 1.5-acre area – including the existing and proposed locations for the tanks – and would require approximately 4,840 cy of grading balanced within the Project site. Any soils and boulders that would be re-used during grading or during construction of the proposed riprap revetment would be temporarily stockpiled within the construction staging and materials laydown area. Approximately 500 cy of steel, concrete, and other demolition debris would be exported from the Project site during demolition and removal of the existing tanks. Additionally, construction of the proposed Project would require vehicle trips related to sediment movement, materials delivery, and construction worker commutes, including the following:

- It is estimated that four construction workers would be required on-site during proposed construction and demolition activities. Assuming that each construction worker would arrive to the Project site in a single-occupancy vehicle, there would be approximately four trips per day during the entire 18-month construction period.

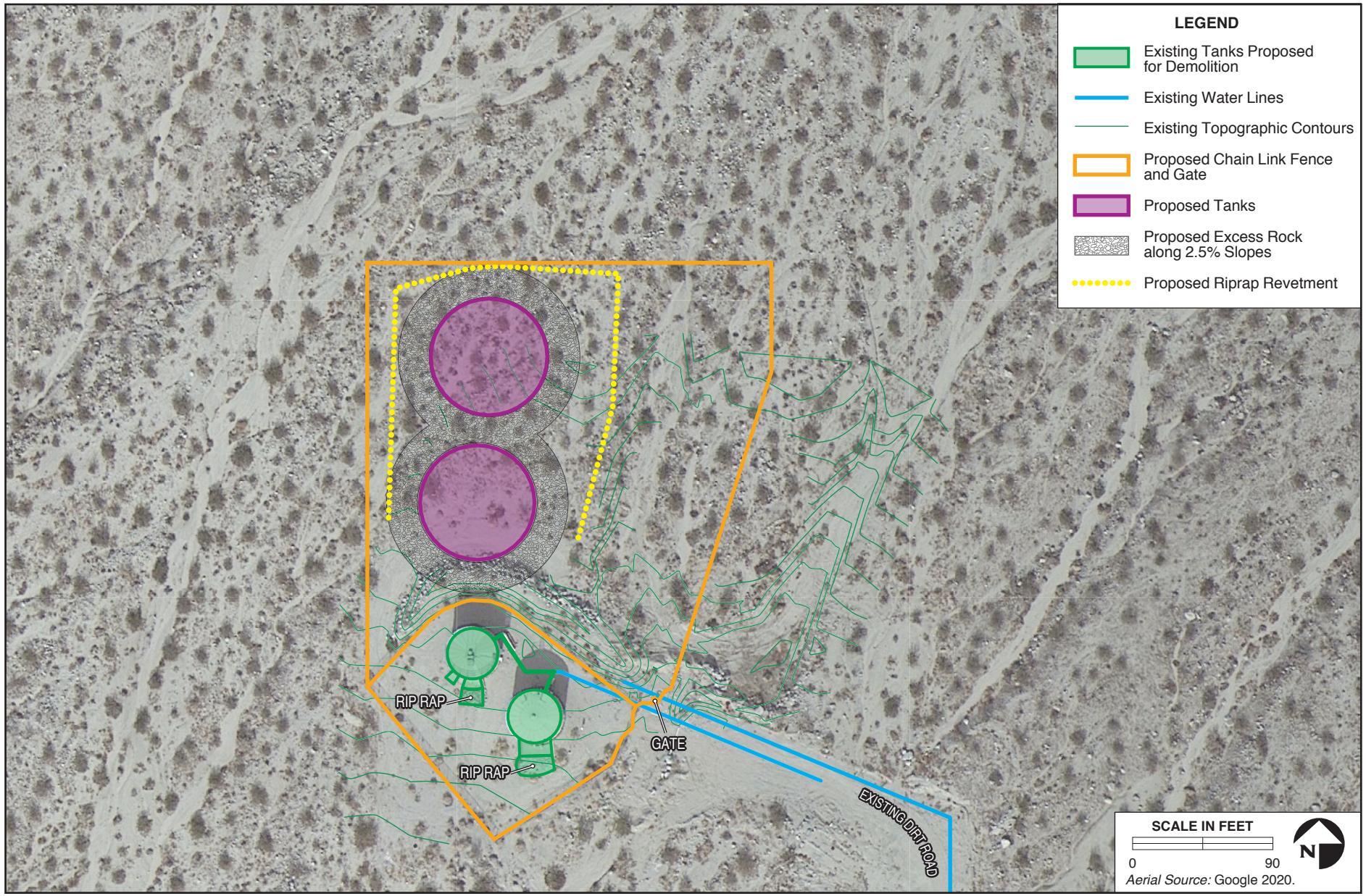
- Heavy construction equipment would be driven to the Project site and would remain on-site for the duration of use. Assuming two trips per each piece of heavy construction equipment, there would be a total of approximately six trips during the 18-month construction period.

- Construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks and associated appurtenances and infrastructure would require approximately one trip per day for materials delivery.

- If necessary, export of soil during proposed grading activities would require approximately three trips per day for a period of 1 week.

- If necessary, import of boulders for the proposed riprap revetment would require approximately three trips per day for a period of 1 week.

- Removal of the existing bolted-steel tanks and associated and appurtenances and infrastructure would require approximately one trip per day for a period of approximately 2 weeks to haul steel, concrete, and other demolition debris off-site.



wood.

Proposed Reservoir Layout

FIGURE 2

Construction Timing

Construction activities would occur over an estimated 18-month period, with the beginning of construction dependent upon funding from the USDA Rural Development Program. Consistent with Riverside County Noise Ordinance (Ordinance No. 847), sound emanating from facilities owned or operated by or for a governmental agency are exempt from the provisions of the noise ordinance. Although exempt from the Riverside County Noise Ordinance, to the maximum extent feasible CVWD would voluntarily limit construction activities to the hours between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Construction Equipment

Heavy construction equipment that would be used for the proposed Project may include the following:

- Grader
- Tractor
- Excavator
- Dozer
- Small bobcats
- Water truck
- Dump trucks
- Flatbed haul truck
- Front-end loader
- Backhoe
- Concrete mixer
- Crane
- Dozer

CVMSHCP Adjacency Guidelines

The Project site is located within the CVMSHCP plan area. The CVMSHCP, which was approved in 2008, is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on the conservation of species and their associated habitats in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County. The overall goal of the CVMSHCP is to maintain and enhance biological diversity and ecosystem processes within the region while allowing for future economic growth (CVAG 2019). CVWD is a permittee under the CVMSHCP.

The CVMSHCP covers 27 sensitive plant and wildlife species (CVMSHCP-covered species) as well as 27 natural communities and includes 21 conservation areas. Covered species include both listed and non-listed species that are conserved under the CVMSHCP. The overall provisions for the plan are subdivided according to specific resource conservation goals that have been organized according to geographic areas, or Conservation Areas. These are identified as Core, Essential, or Other Conserved Habitat for sensitive plan, invertebrate, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species, Essential Ecological Process Areas, and Biological Corridors and Linkages.

As described below in Section 7, *Surrounding Land Uses*, the Project site is located adjacent to the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* and *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* under the CVMSHCP (CVAG 2019). Additionally, the Project site is located near the *Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area Thousand Palms Conservation Area* Therefore, as required by the CVMSHCP, the proposed Project would be required to comply with the CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP; CVAG 2019):

- **Drainage:** Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate plans to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent Conservation Area is not altered in an adverse way when compared with existing conditions. Storm water systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystem processes within the adjacent Conservation Area.

- **Toxics:** Land uses proposed adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that use chemicals or generate bioproducts such as manure that are potentially toxic or may adversely affect wildlife and plant species, habitat, or water quality shall incorporate measures to ensure that application of such chemicals does not result in any discharge to the adjacent Conservation Area.

- **Lighting:** For proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area, lighting shall be shielded and directed toward the developed area. Landscape shielding or other appropriate methods shall be incorporated in project designs to minimize the effects of lighting adjacent to or within the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.

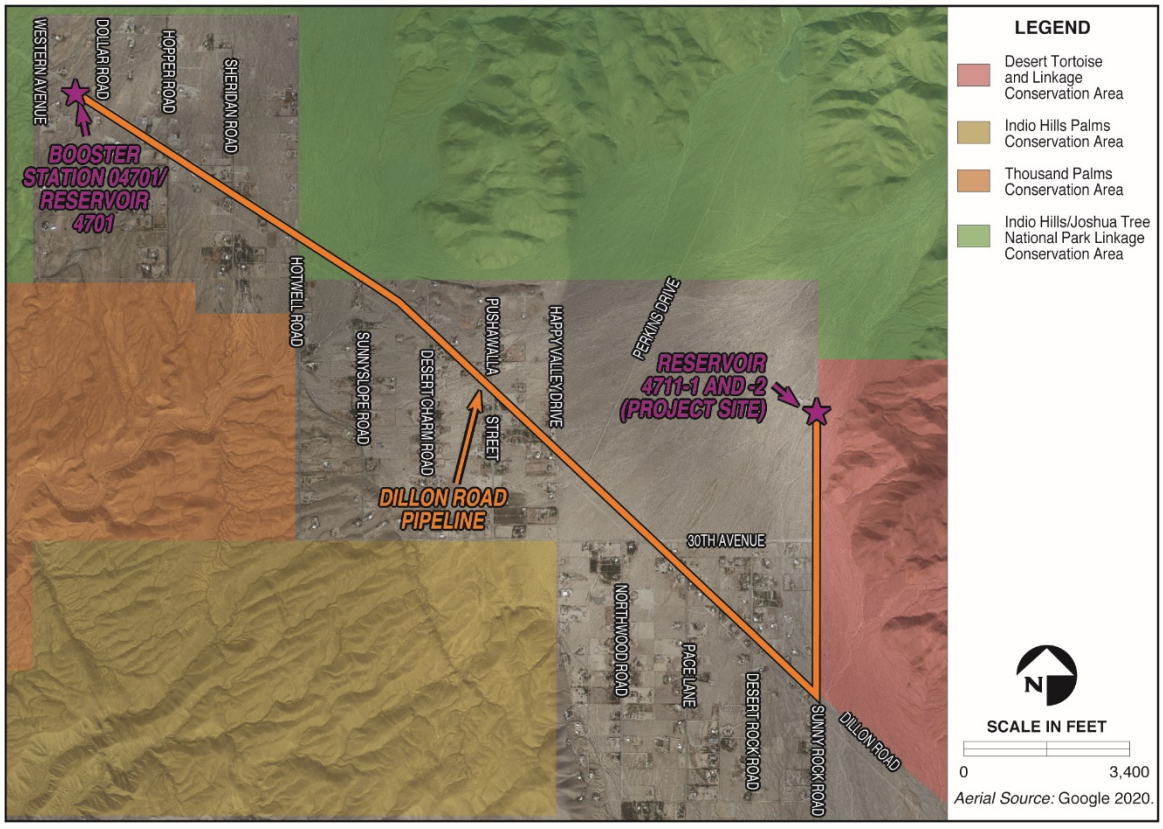
- **Noise:** Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that generates noise in excess of 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) hourly noise equivalent level (L_{eq}) shall incorporate setbacks, berms, or walls, as appropriate, to minimize the effects of noise on the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.

- **Invasives:** Invasive, non-native plant species shall not be incorporated in the landscape for land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area. Landscape treatments within or adjacent to a Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent Feasible; recommended native species are listed in Table 4-112 of the CVMSHCP. The plants listed in Table 4-113 of the CVMSHCP shall not be used within or adjacent to a Conservation Area. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agencies' concurrence.

- **Barriers:** Land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate barriers in individual project designs to minimize unauthorized public access, domestic animal predation, illegal trespass, or dumping in a Conservation Area. Such barriers may include native landscaping, rocks/boulders, fencing, walls and/or signage.

- **Grading/Land Development:** Manufactured slopes associated with site Development shall not extend into adjacent land in a Conservation Area.

7. **SURROUNDING LAND USES:** The Project site is located to the northeast of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills, which has a population of approximately 972 people (U.S. Census 2010; see Section 14.14, *Population and Housing*). The Project site is located more than 0.5 miles to the nearest rural residence, located to the south on 30th Avenue. The area to the north, east, and west of the Project site are undeveloped. The *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* is located immediately adjacent to the north of CVWD's parcel and the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* is located immediately adjacent to the east (see Figure 3). These areas contain significant habitat as well as linkages for wildlife corridors at the mouths of significant canyons.



wood.

Surrounding Land Uses

FIGURE 3

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:** The proposed construction of the welded-steel tanks and associated appurtenances and infrastructure constitute a "project" as defined by CEQA. Additionally, the proposed Project may receive funding from the USDA Rural Development Program. Therefore, the proposed Project may also subject be to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1970, *Environmental Policies and Procedures*, and Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*.

California Environmental Quality Act

The proposed construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 meet the definition of a "project," as defined by CEQA and, therefore, the evaluation of potential environmental impacts is required in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.), and CVWD's Local CEQA Guidelines. CVWD is the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15367. CVWD has prepared this IS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project and to disclose to the public and decision makers the potential environmental effects of the proposed Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 describes the requirements for an IS and Sections 15070-15075 describe the process for the preparation of an MND.

National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed Project may receive funding from the USDA Rural Development Program. Therefore, the proposed Project may also be subject to NEPA, 7 CFR Part 1970, *Environmental Policies and Procedures*, and RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*. This IS has been expanded and formatted to include evaluation of items listed on the USDA RUS Environmental Report (ER) Checklist for Projects with a CEQA Document. The table below identifies where ER Checklist items can be found in this Initial Study.

Table 1. Cross Reference Guide for USDA RUS ER Checklist Items

USDA RUS ER Checklist Item	Corresponding Section of the CEQA-compliant IS containing NEPA Analysis
General Items	
Document if the project may affect a federally listed species or federally designated critical habitat protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) or otherwise affect a special-status species protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BGEPA) or Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA).	Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*, page 32
Identify the watershed basin in which the project is located.	Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, page 65
Discuss whether the project would exceed the *de minimis* thresholds for any criteria pollutant identified in the General Air Conformity Rule pursuant to Section 176(c)(4) of the Clean Air Act.	Section 14.3, *Air Quality*, page 26
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Items	
Discuss if tribal lands, any federally listed sites on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or sites eligible for listing are in the potential Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project.	Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources,* page 47 and Section 14.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, page 88

USDA RUS ER Checklist Item	Corresponding Section of the CEQA-compliant IS containing NEPA Analysis
Indicate if the project activity is listed in Appendix A of the SHPO Programmatic Agreement (PA) as having a minimal level of activity or round disturbance.	Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources*, page 47
Tribal Consultation	
If the project activity is not listed in Appendix A of the SHPO PA or the project is located on tribal land, consultation documentation is required. Conclude the analysis by writing a summary of potential to impact areas of tribal concern.	Section 14.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, page 88
Evaluation of Impact to Resource	
Formally classified lands (i.e., National Parks and Monuments; National Landmarks or Battlefield Sites; National Historic Sites or Parks; Wilderness Areas; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Wildlife Refuges; National Seashores; National Trail System; State parks; federally administered forest or other land; or Native American owned land and leases administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA]).	Section 14.11, *Land Use and Planning*, page 71
Important farmland or forest land.	Section 14.2, *Agriculture and Forestry Resources*, page 24
100-year floodplains regulated under Executive Order (EO) 11988, *Floodplain Management.*	Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, page 65
Wetlands regulated under EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands.*	Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*, page 32
Cultural resources (i.e., historic properties, archaeological sites) listed on or potential to be listed on the NRHP or otherwise protected under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act or the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.	Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources*, page 47
Biological resources (i.e., federally listed species, federally designated critical habitat, or other special-status species).	Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*, page 32
Water quality (involving National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [NPDES] permit, water appropriation permits, or areas designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA] as a sole source aquifer).	Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, page 65
Coastal Zone Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.	The Project site is located more than 50 miles inland, outside of the Coastal Zone. As such the policies and requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act would not be applicable and are not examined further in this IS/MND.

USDA RUS ER Checklist Item	Corresponding Section of the CEQA-compliant IS containing NEPA Analysis
Miscellaneous issues (e.g., visual impacts, air quality, odor, seismic, mudslide areas, noise, transportation, traffic, etc.)	Various sections, according to topic (e.g., Section 14.1, *Aesthetics*, page 20, Section 14.3, *Air Quality*, page 26, Section 14.7, *Geology and Soils*, page 53, Section 14.13, *Noise*, page 74, and Section 14.17, *Transportation*, page 85)
Socioeconomic / environmental justice impacts to minority or low-income areas pursuant to EO 12898, *Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.*	Section 14.14, *Population and Housing*, page 79
Controversy for environmental reasons.	Mandatory Findings of Significance, page 95
Controversy for other than environmental reasons.	Mandatory Findings of Significance, page 95
Extraordinary circumstances which may have a significant environmental effect.	Mandatory Findings of Significance, page 95

Source: RUS Environmental Bulletin 1794A-602, *California RUS Environmental State Supplement*, February 9, 2003.

9. ANTICIPATED AGENCY APPROVALS: Implementation of the proposed Project would be subject to review and approval by agencies with jurisdiction over resources that might be affected by the proposed Project. The following agency approvals and/or permits may be required to implement the proposed Project (see Table 2).

Table 2. Discretionary Permits Potentially Required for the Proposed Improvements

Agency	Permits and Authorizations Required	Activities Subject to Regulations
CVWD	Approval of the MND and MMRP	Approval of the proposed Project
South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) or County of Riverside	Fugitive Dust Permit	Construction activities involving the generation of fugitive dust
County of Riverside	Grading Permit	Earthwork activities
Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Floodplain Permit	Development or substantial improvements within a regulatory floodplain
RWQCB	Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the CWA and/or Waste Discharge Requirement	Discharges of waste that could affect waters of the State
CDFW	Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA)	Diversion or obstruction of the natural flow of any river, stream or lake; deposition of debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream, or lake
SWRCB, RWQCB	Compliance with the NPDES General Construction Permit, Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ through the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)	Stormwater discharges associated with construction and land disturbance activities

Agency	Permits and Authorizations Required	Activities Subject to Regulations
USDA	Funding Authorization	Funding for the proposed Project

Notes:

Federal, State, and Local Agencies
CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife
RWQCB = Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District
SWRCB = State Water Resources Control Board
USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture

10. PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION: The Project site was included in a Biological Survey Report and Cultural Resources Assessment prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015a, 2015b), which included a survey of the area surrounding the existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2. Additionally, at the request of the USDA, a Project-specific Biological Resources Survey (see Appendix B), Cultural Resources Survey (see Appendix D), and 8-Step Floodplain Analysis (see Appendix F) was prepared for the proposed Project. No other known environmental documentation is applicable to the proposed Project or the Project site.

11. AGENCY COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION:

A. Federal, State, and Other Local Agencies

- Daniel Cardona, State Office Community Programs Coordinator, Indio Field Office, Rural Development, USDA

B. Coachella Valley Water District

- William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor
- Elizabeth Meyerhoff, Environmental Specialist (retired)
- Brett Daniels, Biologist (retired)
- Steve Bigley, Director of Environmental Services
- Amer Hassouneh, Domestic Water Engineer
- Dan Ruiz, Engineering Manager

C. Documents & Resources: See *References* below.

12. SUMMARY OF 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:

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☒ Geology and Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

13. DETERMINATION: (To be completed by lead agency) Based on this initial evaluation:

Based on 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 proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. 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 is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Nick Meisinger
CEQA Project Manager
Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

Date

William Patterson
Environmental Supervisor
Coachella Valley Water District

Date

Steve Bigley
Director of Environmental Services
Coachella Valley Water District

Date

14. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts which may result from the proposed Project. For the evaluation of potential impacts, the questions in the IS are stated and answers are provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the IS. The analysis considers the short-term (i.e., construction-related) impacts associated with the proposed Project, and its long-term (i.e., operational) impacts. For each question, the following should be provided:

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a Lead Agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3) Once the Lead Agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less than Significant Impact." The Lead Agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, *Earlier Analyses*, may be cross-referenced).
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 or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analyses Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures, which were incorporated or refined from

the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, etc.). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7) Supporting Information Sources. A source list should be attached and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8) This form is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines and CVWD's Local CEQA Guidelines.
9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Additionally, as described in Section 8, *Environmental Analysis*, the proposed Project may receive funding from the USDA Rural Development Program; therefore, the proposed Project is also subject to compliance with NEPA, 7 CFR Part 1970, *Environmental Policies and Procedures*, and RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*. As such, this IS/MND has been expanded and formatted to include discussion of items listed on the USDA RUS ER Checklist for Projects with a CEQA Document. (Refer to Table 1 for a Cross Reference Guide for USDA RUS ER Checklist Items.)

14.1 AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

As described in Section 3, *Project Location*, the Project site is located in the unincorporated community of Indio Hills, Riverside County, California, approximately 0.5 miles north of 30th Avenue. The Project site is located on a broad alluvial fan south of the Little San Bernardino Mountains (refer to Figure 3). The topography of the Project site and the surrounding vicinity is relatively flat to very gently sloping and characterized by an expansive desert landscape generally comprised of sand, rocks, and creosote bush scrub (see Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*).

The Project site is located in a generally flat to gently sloping desert landscape near the base of the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north and east and distant mountain views to the south and west. The Project site has been previously disturbed and developed with two 35-foot diameter, 16-foot-tall bolted-steel tanks.

Existing development at the Project site is limited to two 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks, which are approximately 35 feet in diameter and stand approximately 16 feet in height. Related infrastructure includes a 175-foot long riprap revetment, perimeter chain-link fence, and unpaved and gated access road.

The Project site is more than 0.5 miles from the nearest rural residence, located to the south along Sunny Rock Road. The areas to the north, east, and west of the Project site are undeveloped. Due to the relatively flat topography of the area, views of the Project site are provided on all sides

of tanks, including areas along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, and Sunny Rock Road as well as the surrounding undeveloped open space areas. Foreground views of the Project site include the expansive desert landscape with the Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 in the midground. Distant background views include the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the north; Mecca Hills and Joshua Tree National Park to the north and east; and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains to the west. Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 are painted a neutral brown or tan and generally blend into the existing visual environment, particularly when viewed from longer distances.

Would the Project:

a, c) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Riverside County General Plan (County of Riverside 2015a) defines scenic vistas as locations that are accessible to the general public and provide a view of the countryside. Additionally, the County's General Plan describes that scenic resources include areas that are visible to the general public and considered visually attractive. While not publicly accessible, the Project site is visible from the areas along nearby roadways (i.e., Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, Sunny Rock Road) as well as the surrounding undeveloped open space areas. The Project site may also be visible from small segments of public trails from the Joshua Tree National Park, including Keys View, the highest point in the park.

Keys View is the highest point in Joshua Tree National Park and provides largely unobstructed panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. While the Project site may be visible from Keys View, the scale of the proposed Project and the distance from the viewpoint would limit the overall visibility of the proposed tanks. The tanks would not distract from the existing views and would not have substantial impacts on this scenic vista.

Implementation of the proposed Project would include short-term, temporary construction activities including excavation, grading, soil compaction, and heavy construction equipment use during construction and demolition activities. During construction activities, construction staging and materials laydown areas would be located on the Project site within previously graded and disturbed areas associated with the existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 as well as areas that are proposed for grading under the proposed Project. Construction worker vehicles would also be temporarily parked in this area during construction hours. The introduction of heavy construction equipment and construction materials would result in minor, temporary impacts to views of the Project site from the surrounding vicinity. However, heavy construction equipment and construction materials would not substantially obscure or obstruct the existing views of the distant mountains and would not distract from panoramic views provided at any surrounding publicly accessible viewpoints (e.g., Keys View). The trails within Joshua Tree National Park provide publicly accessible scenic vistas of the surrounding landscape. However, views of the Project site from these trails are obstructed by the existing topography. Keys View, which is the highest point of Joshua Tree National Park, provides

unobstructed panoramic scenic views of the Coachella Valley. Partial or full views of the Project site may be available from Keys View; however, at a distance of 7 miles (and considering relatively small size of heavy construction equipment), proposed construction and demolition activities would not substantially alter or distract from the existing views. Additionally, as described in Section 14.3, *Air Quality* fugitive dust would be minimized with regular soil watering (see BMP AQ-1) and would not disrupt overall visibility.

Permanent improvements associated with the proposed Project would include the replacement of the two existing bolted-steel tanks with two 1MG welded-steel tanks. The proposed tanks would be 76 feet in diameter (approximately 41 feet wider than the existing tanks) and 43 feet tall (approximately 27 feet taller than the existing tanks). However, the proposed tanks would be painted a neutral brown or tan and would generally be similar in appearance to the existing tanks, particularly when viewed from distance. Associated infrastructure including the proposed riprap revetment and chain-link fence would generally be low-lying and would not noticeably interrupt foreground, mid-ground, or background views. These features would be consistent with the existing development and would not result in noticeable changes to the character or quality of views in the area. Therefore, while the proposed Project would alter the visual conditions of the Project site, the proposed construction and demolition activities as well as the proposed permanent improvements would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the Project site or the surrounding vicinity and impacts would be less than significant.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?

Less Than Significant Impact.

There are no State scenic highways within or adjacent to the Project site (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2019). The nearest State scenic highway, located approximately 23 miles west of the Project site, is an approximately 7-mile long segment of Twentynine Palms Highway (State Route [SR-] 62) that runs from Interstate (I-) 10 toward the communities of Morongo Valley, Yucca, Valley, and Joshua Tree in San Bernardino County (Caltrans 2019). The Project site is not visible from SR-62. No roadways within Riverside County are designated as County scenic highways; however, I-10 and Dillon Road are recognized as eligible for designation as a County scenic highways (County of Riverside 2015b). The Project site is not visible from I-10. However, Dillon Road runs in a northwest-southeast direction approximately 0.8 miles from the Project site. The Project site is visible from Dillon Road for an approximately 0.6-mile segment where views are not obstructed by buildings or other development. As such, vehicles traveling at 40 miles per hour (mph) are able to see the Project site for approximately 54 seconds and vehicles travelling at 60 mph are able to see the Project site for approximately 36 seconds.

Dillon Road is eligible for designation as a County-designated scenic roadway. Dillon Road transverses the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. The Project site can be viewed from an approximately 0.6-mile-long segment of Dillon Road; however, as with the existing tanks, the proposed tanks would generally blend into the existing visual environment and would not distract from the undeveloped desert landscape and distant mountain views.

During the proposed construction and demolition activities construction equipment and materials would potentially be visible from Dillon Road; however, the use of heavy construction equipment would be temporary and would occur at such a distance from Dillon Road that implementation of the proposed Project would not create adverse impacts to the visual character or quality of views from Dillon Road. As previously described, the proposed tanks would be 76 feet in diameter (approximately 41 feet wider than the existing tanks) and 43 feet tall (approximately 27 feet taller than the existing tanks). However, the proposed tanks would be painted a neutral brown or tan and would generally be similar in appearance to the existing tanks, particularly when viewed from distance. As such, the proposed tanks would not result in permanent changes to scenic resources contributing to a locally or State designated scenic highway and the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact.

As described in *Construction Timing*, CVWD would voluntarily limit construction activities to the hours between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Therefore, nighttime lighting would not be required during construction activities. In the event that nighttime lighting is required, it would be downcast to prevent light spillover consistent with the CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP). However, given the distance to the nearest paved roadways and the nearest rural residence any potential impacts associated lighting would be negligible. As with the existing bolted-steel tanks, there would be no lighting associated with the proposed welded-steel tanks. Additionally, the proposed welded-steel tanks would be painted a neutral brown or tan and would not reflect light. As such, the proposed Project would have no impact with respect to light or glare.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

Visual resources are defined as, *"the visible physical features on a landscape (e.g., land, water, vegetation, animals, structures, and other features)"* (U.S. Department of Interior [DOI] 1984). These features form the overall impressions that an observer receives of an area or its landscape character. Landforms, water surfaces, vegetation, and manufactured features are considered characteristic of an area if they are inherent to the structure and function of a landscape. The visual quality of an area may be affected by the introduction of new buildings or structures. These effects may be significant to historic properties, historic properties, traditional cultural places, and cultural landscapes; in areas of scenic beauty, scenic overlooks, scenic highways, wilderness areas, parks, national forests; or along wild and scenic, recreational, or nationwide inventory rivers. These issues have been addressed in Sections 14.1(a) through 14.1(d). As previously described, permanent improvements associated with the proposed Project would include the replacement of the two existing bolted-steel tanks with two 1MG welded-steel tanks. The proposed tanks would be wider and taller than the existing tanks; however, the proposed tanks would be painted a neutral brown or tan and would generally be similar in appearance to the existing tanks, particularly when viewed from distance. Associated infrastructure including the proposed riprap revetment and chain-link fence would generally be low-lying and would not noticeably interrupt foreground, mid-ground, or background views. These features would be consistent with the existing development and would not result in noticeable changes to the character or quality of

views in the area (e.g., public trails from the Joshua Tree National Park, including Keys View). Therefore, while the proposed Project would alter the visual conditions of the Project site, the proposed construction and demolition activities as well as the proposed permanent improvements would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the Project site or the surrounding vicinity and impacts would be less than significant.

14.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) regarding the State's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project, Forest Legacy Assessment Project, and Forest Carbon Measurement Methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).				
Would the Project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g])?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the Project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact.

The California Department of Conservation's (CDC's) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program identifies several categories of agricultural resources that are significant and require special consideration. According to the Farmland Map, the Project site is not located in an area designated

as “Prime Farmland,” “Unique Farmland,” or “Farmland of Statewide Importance” (as defined by Government Code Sections 51201[c] and 56064) or “Agricultural Land” (as defined by Government Code Section 56016) (CDC Division of Land Resource Protection 2017). Further, neither short-term, ground-disturbing activities (e.g., excavation, grading, soil compaction, etc.) nor the replacement of the existing bolted-steel tanks with the larger welded-steel tanks would result in permanent conversion of potential farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, there would be no impact to farmland associated with the implementation of the proposed Project.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

No Impact.

As described in Section 5, *Zoning* the Project site is zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)*. Pursuant to Section 15.1(E)(1) of the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 348) this zoning designation provides for the conservation of water and the development of water storage and distribution infrastructure, such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells, and necessary pumping and water production facilities (County of Riverside 2019c). The Project site is neither zoned for agricultural uses nor under a Williamson Act Contract (CDC Division of Land Resource Protection 2017). Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with any existing zoning designation for agricultural use, or the provisions of a Williamson Act Contract, and there would be no impact.

c, d) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g])?

No Impact.

As previously described the Project site is zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)* (refer to Section 5, *Zoning*). The Project site and the surrounding vicinity are not zoned for forest land or timberland. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland and there would be no impact on forest land, timber land or agricultural resources.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact.

As described in Section 4, *General Plan Designation*, land use on the Project site is designated as *Open Space-Rural (OS-RUR)* (County of Riverside 2019b). The *OS-RUR* designation is applied to remote, privately owned open space areas with limited access and a general lack of public services. The Project site is not currently used as farmland or forest land and the proposed Project would not result in a change in land use at the Project site or within the surrounding vicinity. Therefore, there would be no impact to farmland or forest land associated with the implementation of the proposed Project.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), the USDA regulations implementing the FPPA (7 CFR Part 658), and USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) No. 9500-3, *Land Use Policy*, require a consideration of the potential effects a USDA action may have on important farmland. Pursuant to the USDA RUS ER Checklist for Projects with a CEQA Document, an analysis of important farmland and important forest land has been provided in Sections 14.2(a) through 14.2(e). Neither short-term, ground-disturbing construction activities (e.g., excavation, grading, soil compaction, etc.) nor the replacement of the existing bolted-steel tanks with the proposed larger welded-steel tanks would result in permanent conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use.

14.3 AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.				
Would the Project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under the applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Project site is located within the Coachella Valley Planning Area of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB), which is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) (SCAQMD 2020). The SCAQMD monitors air pollutant levels to ensure the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are met. The USEPA has set NAAQS for six pollutants, which are called “criteria pollutants”: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2). California regulates three additional criteria pollutants: hydrogen sulfide (H_2S), visibility reducing particles, and vinyl chloride. Further, California regulates approximately 200 other chemicals, referred to as toxic air contaminants (TACs) (CARB 2019).

The Coachella Valley Planning Area of the SSAB is in *nonattainment* of both Federal and State standards for 8-hour O_3 and PM_{10} (USEPA 2020; SCAQMD 2017). Under Federal standards, the Coachella Valley is in “serious” *nonattainment* for PM_{10} and “severe-15” *nonattainment* for O_3,

indicating that the area has 15 years from the *nonattainment* designation date to attain the O_3 NAAQS. The Coachella Valley Planning Area is in *attainment* or *unclassified* for all other criteria air pollutants. The SCAQMD is responsible for formulating and implementing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB to provide a strategy for the *attainment* of Federal and State air quality standards. A project is consistent with the AQMP if it furthers one or more policies and/or does not obstruct other policies.

The SCAQMD provides numerical thresholds to analyze the significance of construction and operational emissions (see Table 3). These thresholds are designed such that a project consistent with the thresholds would not have an individually or cumulatively significant impact on air quality within the SSAB.

The SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook (1993)* identifies two key indicators of consistency:

- Whether the project would result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay timely *attainment* of NAAQS or the interim emission reductions specified in the AQMP, except as provided for CO in Section 9.4 for relocating CO hot spots.

- Whether or not the project would exceed the assumptions in the AQMP in the year of project build-out.

Table 3. SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Pollutant	Mass Daily Thresholds (lbs/day)	
	Construction	Operation
Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)	100	55
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	75	55
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	150	150
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	55	55
Ozone (O_3)	-	125
Sulfur Oxides (SO_x)	150	150
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	550	550
Lead (Pb)	3	3
Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs)	Maximum Incremental Cancer Risk ≥ 10 in 1 million Cancer Burden > 0.5 excess cancer cases (in areas ≥ 1 in 1 million) Chronic and Acute Hazard Index ≥ 1.0 (project increment)	
Odor	Project creates an odor nuisance pursuant to SQAQMD Rule 402	
NO_2 1-hour average annual arithmetic mean 10.4 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$) (construction) and 2.5 $\mu g/m^3$ (operation) 1.0 $\mu g/m^3$	SSAB is in *attainment* Project is significant if it causes or contributes to an exceedance of the following *attainment* standards: 0.18 parts per million (ppm) (State) 0.03 ppm (State) and 0.0534 ppm (Federal)	

Pollutant	Mass Daily Thresholds (lbs/day)	
	Construction	Operation
PM_{10} 24-hour average annual average	10.4 µg/m^3 (construction) and 2.5 µg/m^3 (operation) 1.0 µg/m^3	
$PM_{2.5}$ 24-hour average	10.4 µg/m^3 (construction) and 2.5 µg/m^3 (operation)	
SO_2 1-hour average 24-hour average	0.25 ppm (State) and 0.075 ppm (Federal – 99th percentile) 0.04 ppm (State)	
Sulfate 24-hour average 25 µg/m^3 (State)	25 µg/m^3 (State)	
CO 1-hour average 8-hour average	SSAB is in *attainment* Project is significant if it causes or contributes to an exceedance of the following *attainment* standards: 20 ppm (State) and 35 ppm (Federal) 9.0 ppm (State/Federal)	
Pb 30-day Average Rolling 3-month average	1.5 µg/m^3 (State) 0.15 µg/m^3 (Federal)	

Source: SCAQMD 2019.

In addition, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) in response to concerns regarding acute exposure of individuals to criteria pollutants in local communities. LSTs have been developed for NO_x, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that would not cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable Federal or State standard at the nearest sensitive receptor, taking into consideration ambient concentrations in each source receptor area, distance to the sensitive receptor, and project size. LSTs only apply to emissions within a fixed stationary location; they are not applicable to mobile sources.

The SCAQMD LSTs are defined for 37 source receptor areas (SRAs). The Project site is located in source receptor area 30 (SRA-30), Coachella Valley (SCAQMD 2009). LSTs have been developed for emissions within construction areas up to 5 acres in size. The SCAQMD provides look-up tables for sites that measure up to 1, 2, or 5 acres. The proposed Project would occur over an approximate 1.5-acre area. LSTs also consider the distance of the Project site from sensitive receptors and provide thresholds for distances from 25 to 500 meters. The Project site is located approximately 0.5 miles (805 meters) from the nearest sensitive receptor (i.e., rural residences along 30th Avenue) and therefore, LSTs do not apply to the proposed Project.

Construction Emissions

Air emissions were estimated for the proposed Project using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2. The following discussion of the potential effects on air quality draws on the results of that analysis, which are presented in Appendix A.

Proposed construction and demolition activities have been conservatively estimated to occur over a period of approximately 18 months (refer to *Construction Timing*). During this period, it is anticipated that construction workers would be operating one or more pieces of heavy construction equipment. Additionally, the number of vehicle trips projected to occur during the 18-month construction period were calculated based on the number of construction worker trips, required soil export, required materials delivery, and required demolition debris removal (refer to *Construction*). Peak daily construction emissions projected for the 18-month construction period are presented in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, the construction emissions associated with the proposed Project would be well below SCAQMD thresholds.

Table 4. Peak Construction Emissions

	Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	VOC	**NO_x**	**CO**	**SO_x**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Peak Construction	4.06	41.77	27.08	0.05	15.18	4.24
SCAQMD Thresholds	*75*	*100*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Exceed Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: Wood 2020 (see Appendix A).

Long-Term Operational Emissions

Principal sources of operational emissions typically include vehicle trips generated by a new land uses (e.g., residential, office, and commercial land uses), combustion of natural gas for heating, use of electricity, use of landscaping equipment, and application of architectural coatings during maintenance activities. Similar to the existing bolted-steel tanks, operation of the proposed welded-steel tanks would generate minor emissions due to energy consumption necessary to operate reservoirs (e.g., electrically operated meters, mixing system, etc.) as well as minor maintenance activities (e.g., brush management within the fenceline, application of architectural coatings, etc.). However, energy consumption associated with these operations and maintenance activities would be negligible and similar to existing emissions of the tanks proposed for replacement.

Best Management Practices

The proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to air quality at the regional or local levels. However, to ensure compliance with SCAQMD rules and County requirements, the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented by CVWD:

BMP AQ-1: During clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation operations, excessive fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering or other dust preventive measures using the following procedures, as specified in SCAQMD Rule 403 (*Fugitive Dust*):

- All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

- Watering shall occur at least twice daily with complete coverage, preferable in the late morning and after work is done for the day.

- All material transported on- or off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

- The area disturbed by cleaning, grading, earth moving, or excavation operations shall be minimized so as to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

BMP AQ-2: Emissions from heavy construction equipment and construction vehicles shall be controlled by maintaining engines in good operating condition per manufacturer's specifications and to the satisfaction of a qualified engineer.

Would the Project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact.

As shown in Table 4, the minor, short-term construction emissions associated with the construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks and the demolition of the existing bolted-steel tanks would not exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds identified within the AQMP. As previously described, following the completion of the proposed construction and demolition activities, the proposed welded-steel tanks would result in minor energy use associated with operations and maintenance activities; however, these activities would be similar to those associated with the existing bolted-steel tanks. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in new or substantial increases in existing operational emissions. The AQMP is based on emission projections, which assume land use composition and intensity from the Land Use Element of the County's General Plan (County of Riverside 2019a). The proposed Project does not include any change in land uses or operations activities at the Project site and would not facilitate additional population growth – either directly or indirectly – that may be inconsistent with the AQMP (see Section 14.16[a]).

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under the applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The proposed Project would result in criteria pollutant emissions from short-term construction activities and long-term operation and maintenance activities associated with the proposed welded-steel tanks. As previously described, construction emissions associated with the proposed Project were estimated using CalEEMod version 2016.3.2. In instances where Project-specific information was not available (e.g., construction equipment horsepower, length of construction worker commutes, soil moisture content, etc.), the analysis relied on CalEEMod default assumptions for construction activities.

SCAQMD's Rule 403 (*Fugitive Dust*) and Rule 403.1 (*Supplemental Fugitive Dust Control Requirements for Coachella Valley Sources*) require construction projects to implement measures to suppress fugitive dust emissions (e.g., limitations on construction during high winds, covering soil stockpiles, watering exposed soils, etc.). CVWD would be required to have a Fugitive Dust Control Plan approved by either the SCAQMD and/or Riverside County prior to the initiation of excavation, grading, and soil compaction activities. Fugitive dust emissions generated by excavation, grading, soil compaction, and other ground-disturbing activities (e.g., heavy haul trucks and construction workers vehicles traveling along the unpaved access road) would be short-term and temporary and would not persist beyond the 18-month construction period. Further, given the distance of the Project site from the rural residences along 30th Avenue, any fugitive dust generated during construction activities associated with the proposed Project would generally settle before reaching off-site sensitive receptors.

The proposed Project would replace the two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. Supporting infrastructure and appurtenances (e.g., water meters, valves, underground pipeline connections, riprap revetment, chain-link fence, etc.) would be similar in character to the existing infrastructure. The proposed Project does not involve the construction of any substantially new infrastructure (e.g., buildings, pump stations, etc.) that would substantially increase demand for electricity or natural gas (see Section 14.6, *Energy*). Long-term, operational emissions of criteria pollutants would result from vehicle trips associated with routine inspections and maintenance of the proposed water infrastructure. However, operational activities and maintenance of the proposed welded-steel tanks would not substantially differ from similar activities associated with the existing bolted-steel tanks. Construction and operational emissions associated with the proposed Project would not exceed, or even approach, the SCAQMD recommended daily thresholds for Project-specific impacts. Therefore, Project-specific impacts and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Sensitive populations (e.g., children, senior citizens, and acutely or chronically ill people) are more susceptible to the effects of criteria pollutant emissions than the general population. The nearest rural residences are located approximately 0.5 miles from the Project site along 30th Avenue. The nearest schools, hospitals, rest homes, childcare facilities, places of worship, libraries, and formal recreation areas are located outside of unincorporated community of Indio Hills in the neighboring cities of Palm Desert, Indio, and Coachella.

The proposed Project would not generate short-term construction emissions or long-term operational emissions in sufficient quantities to expose sensitive receptors to substantial criteria pollutant concentrations. Construction of proposed facilities would not generate a significant number of diesel-fueled heavy haul truck trips or other diesel-fueled heavy construction equipment activities and would therefore not be a significant source of TACs. Further, construction emissions would be short-term and temporary and would not persist beyond the 18-month construction period. As previously described, the proposed Project would result in negligible operational emissions associated with routine inspection and maintenance of the proposed

facilities. Therefore, long-term Project-related impacts to sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Odors may be generated from exhaust emissions from heavy construction equipment during the construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project (e.g., unburned hydrocarbons from tailpipes of construction equipment). However, any such odors would be short-term and temporary, consistent with standard construction activities, and would not affect substantial numbers of people in the vicinity of the construction area – particularly given that the Project site is located 0.5 miles from the nearest rural residences along 30th Avenue. Therefore, impacts associated with odors during construction would be less than significant.

Operation of the proposed Project, including proposed welded-steel tanks and associated appurtenances and infrastructure, would not result in odors that would adversely affect the surrounding vicinity.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

General Conformity Rule

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) place most of the responsibility to achieve compliance with NAAQS on individual States. To this end, USEPA requires each State to prepare a State Implementation Plan (SIP). A SIP is a compilation of goals, strategies, schedules, and enforcement actions that will lead the State into compliance with all NAAQS.

Federal actions must comply with the General Conformity Rule established under the Section 176(c)(4) of the Clean Air Act. Under the General Conformity Rule, Federal agencies must work with States, Tribes, and local governments in *nonattainment* or *maintenance* areas to ensure that Federal actions conform to the initiatives established the implementation plans. As described in RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*, direct and indirect emissions originating in a *nonattainment* or *maintenance* area must be analyzed for conformity with the applicable implementation plan. These issues have been addressed in Sections 14.3(a) through 14.2(c). The Coachella Valley Planning Area of the SSAB is *nonattainment* of both Federal and State standards for 8-hour O_3 and PM_{10} (USEPA 2020; SCAQMD 2017). Under Federal standards, the Coachella Valley is in "serious" *nonattainment* for PM_{10} and "severe-15" *nonattainment* for O_3. However, as described in Table 4 the construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would not exceed the SCAQMD thresholds. Additionally, the proposed Project would not exceed *de minimis* thresholds established in the General Conformity Rule (40 CFR §93.153).

Another air quality issue addressed in RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*, is off-site nuisance or annoyance odors. This issue, which is typically associated with wastewater and solid waste facilities, is addressed in Section 14.3(d). Odors may be generated from exhaust emissions from

heavy construction equipment during the construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project (e.g., unburned hydrocarbons from tailpipes of construction equipment). However, any such odors would be short-term and temporary, consistent with standard construction activities, and would not affect substantial numbers of people in the vicinity of the construction area. Operation of the proposed Project, including proposed welded-steel tanks and associated appurtenances and infrastructure, would not result in odors that would adversely affect the surrounding vicinity.

14.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Vegetation and Wildlife

The existing vegetation at the Project site is characterized as creosote bush scrub.

As described in Section 10, *Previous Environmental Documentation*, the Project site was included in a Biological Survey Report prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015a; see Appendix B), which included a survey of the area surrounding existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2. CVWD has conducted numerous site visits associated with the proposed Project – including the most recent site visits on February 5, 2020 and May 6, 2020 – and confirmed that the vegetation at the Project site has not measurably changed since 2015 (Personal Communication with Brett Daniels, CVWD Biologist). Additionally, at the request of USDA, a Project-specific biological survey was conducted on January 8, 2021 (see Appendix B). Dominant plant species at the Project site include creosote bush, burrowbrush, burro weed, brittlebush, sweetbush, and Mojave rabbitbrush. The only vertebrate species / sign noted during the field visits were mourning dove, Costa's hummingbird, Say's phoebe, and common raven. Desert woodrat nests, and coyote tracks and scat were also observed (Wood 2021a). However, other wildlife commonly found in this setting include desert cottontail, desert iguana, and common chuckwalla, raven, and turkey vulture (CVWD 2015a).A literature review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory identified a total of 37 special-status biological resources known to occur within a 5-mile radius of the Project site, including 12 plants, 3 invertebrates, 3 amphibians, 6 reptiles, 8 birds, and 5 mammals (see Tables 5 and 6). Special-status plants are not expected to occur on the Project site due to the high level of disturbance and general lack of suitable physical conditions (e.g., soils, climate, water availability, etc.). Some special-status wildlife have been recorded in past surveys within the vicinity of the Project site; however, there are no records of special-status wildlife occurring within or immediately adjacent to the Project site.

Table 5. Special-Status Plant Species Previously Recorded within 5 Miles of the Project Site (CNDDB)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Probability of Occurrence at the Project Site
Alverson's foxtail cactus	*Coryphantha alversonii*	S3, CRPR 4.3	Absent
California satintail	*Imperata brevifolia*	S3, CRPR 2B.1	Very Low
Chaparral sand-verbena	*Abronia villosa* var. *aurita*	S2, CRPR 1B.1	Absent
Coachella Valley milkvetch	*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*	S1, CRPR 1B.2	Low
Desert beardtongue	*Penstemon pseudospectabilis* ssp. *pseudospectabilis*	S3, CRPR 2B.2	Low
Desert spike-moss	*Selaginella eremophila*	S2S3, CRPR 2B.2	Absent

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Probability of Occurrence at the Project Site
Latimer's woodland-gilia	*Saltugilia latimeri*	S3, CRPR 1B.2	Absent
Narrow-leaf sandpaper-plant	*Petalonyx linearis*	S3?, CRPR 2B.3	Absent
Parry's spineflower	*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *parryi*	S3, CRPR 1B.1	Low
Slender cottonheads	*Nemacaulis denudata* var. *gracilis*	S2, CRPR 2B.2	Very Low
Spiny-hair blazing star	*Mentzelia tricuspis*	S2, CRPR 2B.1	Absent
Triple-ribbed milkvetch	*Astragalus tricarinatus*	FE, S2, CRPR 1B.2	Low

Notes:

Federal Status
FE: Federally Endangered

State Rankings
S1: Critically Imperiled
S2: Imperiled
S3: Vulnerable

CNPS California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) Designations
1B: Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
2B: Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
Subdivisions within Categories
0.1: Seriously threatened in California
0.2: Moderately threatened in California
0.3: Not very threatened in California

Sources: Wood 2021a (see Appendix B).

Table 6. Special-status Wildlife Species Previously Recorded within 5 Miles of the Project Site (CNDDB)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Probability of Occurrence at the Project Site
Invertebrates			
Casey's June beetle	*Dinacoma caseyi*	FE, S1	Absent
Coachella Valley giant sand-treader cricket	*Macrobaenetes valgum*	S1S2	Low
Coachella Valley Jerusalem cricket	*Stenopelmatus cahuilaensis*	S1S2	Absent
Amphibians			
Arroyo toad	*Anaxyrus californicus*	FE, SSC, S2S3	Absent
California red-legged frog	*Rana draytonii*	FT, SSC, S2S3	Absent
Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	*Uma inornata*	FT, SE, S1	Absent
Reptiles			
California glossy snake	*Arizona elegans occidentalis*	SSC, S2	Low
Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	*Uma inornata*	FT, SE, S1	Low
Desert tortoise	*Gopherus agassizii*	FT, ST, S2S3	Moderate

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Probability of Occurrence at the Project Site
Northern red-diamond rattlesnake	*Crotalus ruber*	SSC, S3	Low
Orange-throated whiptail	*Aspidoscelis hyperythra beldingi*	WL, S2S3	Absent
Southern California legless lizard	*Anniella stebbinsi*	SSC, S3	Very Low
Birds			
Burrowing owl	*Athene cunicularia*	SSC, S3	Nesting: Low Foraging: Moderate
Golden eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*	FP, WL, S3	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Low
Le Conte's thrasher	*Toxostoma lecontei*	SSC, S3	Nesting: Low Foraging: Low
Least Bell's vireo	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	FE, SE, S2	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Absent
Loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*	SSC, S4	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Moderate
Prairie falcon	*Falco mexicanus*	WL, S4	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Low-Moderate
Southwestern willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii extimus*	FE, SE, S1	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Absent
Yellow warbler	*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*	SSC, S3S4	Nesting: Absent Foraging: Low
Mammals			
Coachella Valley (Palm Springs) round-tailed ground squirrel	*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus*	SSC, S2	Low
Palm Springs pocket mouse	*Perognathus longimembris bangsi*	SSC, S2	Moderate
Peninsular bighorn sheep	*Ovis canadensis nelson*	FE, ST, S1	Absent
San Diego desert woodrat	*Neotoma lepida intermedia*	SSC. S3S4	Possibly Present
Townsend's big-eared bat	*Corynorhinus townsendii*	SSC, S2	Roosting: Absent Foraging: Moderate

Notes:

Federal Status
FE: Federally Endangered
FT: Federally Threatened

State Status
SE: State Endangered
ST: State Threatened

CDFW Status
FP: Fully Protected
WL: Watch List
SSC: Species of Special Concern

State Rankings
S1: Critically Imperiled
S2: Imperiled
S3: Vulnerable
S4: Apparently Secure

Sources: Wood 2021a; CDFW 2020; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) 2020b (see Appendix B).

Critical Habitat

There is no federally designated critical habitat at the Project site (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2020a).

Aquatic Resources

An Aquatic Resources Delineation (ARD) was prepared for the proposed Project in May 2020 to describe any potential wetlands and jurisdictional drainages within or near the proposed Project site (see Appendix C). The ARD concluded there are no wetland(s) visibly identifiable by vegetation types or hydrology. Jurisdictional drainages were mapped within the Project site through review of aerial photographs, topographic maps, the National Wetlands Inventory, soil mapping data, and historical streamflow using the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) wetland criteria parameters (i.e., the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology).

The Project site contains 11 ephemeral drainages identified within the survey area. Table 7 includes a list of waterways identified in the survey area, their location, potential jurisdictional status, area of delineation, and Cowardin classification. The USACE, in combination with the USEPA, reserves the ultimate authority in making the final jurisdictional determination of waters of the U.S. and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) reserves the ultimate authority in making the final jurisdictional determination of waters of the State. Additionally, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has ultimate discretion in the determination of their jurisdiction.

Based on the ARD, all 11 drainages meet the requirements for RWQCB and CDFW jurisdiction as “waters of the State” as they have defined bed and bank and ordinary high water mark (OHWM) characteristics. No wetland or riparian communities were observed on the Project site.

Table 7. Summary of Delineated Waters Within Survey Area

Drainage Number	Channel Length within Survey Area (feet)	Channel Area within Survey Area (acre)
1	231	0.016
1a	177	0.013
2	345	0.207
2a	233	0.018
3	495	0.318
3a	104	0.010
3b	194	0.018
3c	167	0.011
4	301	0.034
5	135	0.065
5a	114	0.008
Total	**2,496**	**0.718**

Notes: "Drainage Number" corresponds with the numbering on Figure 4.
Source: Wood 2020 (see Appendix C).

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

The Project site is located within the CVMSHCP plan area. The CVMSHCP, which was approved in 2008, is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on the conservation of species and their associated habitats in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County. The overall goal of the CVMSHCP is to maintain and enhance biological diversity and ecosystem processes within the region while allowing for future economic growth (CVAG 2007). CVWD is a permittee under the CVMSHCP.

The CVMSHCP covers 27 sensitive plant and wildlife species (CVMSHCP-covered species) as well as 27 natural communities and includes 21 conservation areas. Covered species include both listed and non-listed species that are adequately conserved by the CVMSHCP. The overall provisions for the plan are subdivided according to specific resource conservation goals that have been organized according to geographic areas, or Conservation Areas. These are identified as Core, Essential, or Other Conserved Habitat for sensitive plan, invertebrate, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species, Essential Ecological Process Areas, and Biological Corridors and Linkages.

The Project site is located adjacent to the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area and the Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area under the CVMSHCP (CVAG 2019).

Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area. *The Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* is located immediately adjacent to the north of the Project site (refer to Figure 3). This Conservation Area is bounded on the north by the Joshua Tree National Park Conservation Area and on the south by the Thousand Palms Conservation Area. The *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage* Conservation *Area*

contains a total of approximately 13,410 acres and provides Core Habitat for the desert tortoise in conjunction with the *Joshua Tree National Park Conservation Area* and the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* (CVAG 2016). This Conservation Area contains other conserved habitat for Coachella Valley milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*), Mecca aster (*Xylorhiza cognata*), Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tereticaudus chlorus*), and Palm Springs pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris bangsi*), but the habitat within the area is not regarded as large enough by itself to maintain a viable population of any of these species. Sonoran creosote bush scrub and Mojave mixed woody scrub natural communities occur in the Conservation Area. This Conservation Area also provides a wildlife corridor between the Indio Hills and the Little San Bernardino Mountains, including Joshua Tree National Park. Conservation objectives of the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area include to conservation of existing ecological processes, fluvial transport area, biological corridors and linkages as well as habitat for desert tortoise and Le Conte's Thrasher.

Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area. The *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* encompasses most of the land between the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains Wildernesses and Joshua Tree National Park. This Conservation Area contains a total of approximately 89,900 acres including Core Habitat for the desert tortoise and other conserved habitat for Le Conte's thrasher, desert tortoise, Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, and the Palm Springs pocket mouse (CVAG 2016). This Conservation Area also contains suitable migration habitat for riparian bird species. Natural communities in the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* include Sonoran creosote bush scrub, Sonoran mixed woody and succulent scrub, Mojave mixed woody scrub, and desert dry wash woodland. This area provides biological corridors focused on large I-10 underpasses, linking the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains Wildernesses with Joshua Tree National Park. Conservation objectives for the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* include conservation of habitat for desert tortoise, Mecca aster, Orocopia sage (*Salvia greatae*), and Le Conte's thrasher. Other conservation objectives include maintaining biological corridors and conservation of desert dry wash woodland natural community.

Other nearby conservation areas include:

Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area. The *Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area* includes the portion of the Indio Hills to the east of the existing Coachella Valley Fringe Toe Lizard Preserve. This Conservation Area is bounded on the west and northwest by the *Thousand Palms Conservation Area* and on the south and southeast by the *East Indio Hills Conservation Area*. The *Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area* contains a total of approximately 6,230 acres and provides Core Habitat for the Mecca aster and other conserved habitat for the crissal thrasher, Le Conte's thrasher, Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, Palm Springs pocket mouse, and southern yellow bat (*Dasypterus ega*) (CVAG 2016). Conserved natural communities occurring in this area include mesquite hummocks, Sonoran creosote bush scrub, Sonoran mixed woody and succulent scrub, desert dry wash woodland, and desert fan palm oasis woodland. This Conservation Area is linked to Joshua Tree National Park through the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area*. Conservation objectives of the *Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area* include conservation of habitat for Mecca aster, Le Conte's thrasher, and woodland natural community which provides habitat for riparian birds and the southern yellow bat.

Thousand Palms Conservation Area. The *Thousand Palms Conservation Area* constitutes the largest unfragmented habitat area on the Coachella Valley floor. The Thousand Palms Conservation Area contains a total of approximately 25,900 acres (CVAG 2016). This conservation area provides core habitat for the Coachella Valley milkvetch, Coachella Valley giant sand-treader cricket (*Macrobaenetes valgum*), Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (*Uma inornate*), flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*), Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, and Palm Springs pocket mouse. Le Conte's thrashers and burrowing owls also occur in this Conservation Area. The *Thousand Palms Conservation Area* is linked to the *Willow Hole Conservation Area* to the west through the *Edom Hill Conservation Area*; to the *East Indio Hills Conservation Area* to the east through the *Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area*; and to Joshua Tree National Park to the north through the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area*. Conservation objectives for the *Thousand Palms Conservation Area* include the provision of the habitat for the Coachella Valley milkvetch, Mecca aster, Coachella Valley giant sand-treader cricket, Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, Palm Springs pocket mouse, and Le Conte's thrasher. Other conservation objectives include conserving burrowing owl burrows, conserving refugia locations for the desert pupfish (*Cyprinodon macularius*), maintaining wildlife crossings, and maintaining natural communities, hydrologic groundwater regime.

As required by the CVMSHCP, the proposed Project would be required to comply with the CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP; CVAG 2019):

- **Drainage:** Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate plans to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent Conservation Area is not altered in an adverse way when compared with existing conditions. Storm water systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystem processes within the adjacent Conservation Area.

- **Toxics:** Land uses proposed adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that use chemicals or generate bioproducts such as manure that are potentially toxic or may adversely affect wildlife and plant species, habitat, or water quality shall incorporate measures to ensure that application of such chemicals does not result in any discharge to the adjacent Conservation Area.

- **Lighting:** For proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area, lighting shall be shielded and directed toward the developed area. Landscape shielding or other appropriate methods shall be incorporated in project designs to minimize the effects of lighting adjacent to or within the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.

- **Noise:** Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that generates noise in excess of 75 dBA L_{eq} shall incorporate setbacks, berms, or walls, as appropriate, to minimize the effects of noise on the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.

- **Invasives:** Invasive, non-native plant species shall not be incorporated in the landscape for land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area. Landscape treatments within or adjacent to a Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent Feasible; recommended native species are listed in Table 4-112 of the CVMSHCP. The plants listed in Table 4-113 of the CVMSHCP shall not be used within or adjacent to a Conservation Area. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agencies' concurrence.

- **Barriers:** Land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate barriers in individual project designs to minimize unauthorized public access, domestic animal predation, illegal trespass, or dumping in a Conservation Area. Such barriers may include native landscaping, rocks/boulders, fencing, walls and/or signage.

- **Grading/Land Development:** Manufactured slopes associated with site Development shall not extend into adjacent land in a Conservation Area.

Would the Project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

There are 37 special-status plant species that have been previously documented within a 5-mile radius of the Project site (refer to Table 6). However, there are no records of special-status plants or special-status wildlife occurring within or immediately adjacent to the Project site. Additionally, special-status species (or signs of special-status wildlife species) were not observed during the survey conducted on July 9, 2015, any of the subsequent site visits on February 5, 2020 and May 6, 2020, or the Project-specific survey conducted on January 8, 2021.

The federally listed and State-listed threatened desert tortoise is the only listed species with potential habitat occurring within the Project site. Additionally, foraging habitat is present for the CDFW Species of Special Concern burrowing owl and loggerhead shrike as well as the CDFW Watch List species prairie falcon. Potential habitat is also present for the CDFW Species of Special Concern Palm Springs pocket mouse, San Diego desert woodrat, and Townsend's big-eared bat (foraging). Ground-disturbing activities associated with the construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks and demolition of the existing bolted-steel tanks would result in vegetation removal and could potentially have adverse effects on sensitive biological resources. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in direct mortality of special-status species. Additionally, the habitat within the Project site is not unique to the area. Removal of 1.5 acres of potential habitat as a result of the proposed construction activities would not have a significant impact on these species. Additionally, as described in Section 14.13, *Noise*, noise associated with the proposed construction and demolition activities would have the potential to disturb wildlife; however, these impacts would be short-term and temporary and would not persist beyond the 18-month construction period.

Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 would reduce potential adverse impacts to special-status species to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training: A biological resources Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities associated with proposed Project. The purpose of the WEAP training is to educate construction personnel about the potential for biological resources within the Project site – including foraging birds as well as the Townsend's big-eared bat, San Diego desert woodrat, Palm Spring pocket mouse, and desert tortoise – and the measures to protect these resources if they are encountered. The WEAP shall explain the applicable measures to be implemented to avoid potential impacts to biological resources. The WEAP training shall be given to all construction personnel at project initiation, and copies of the WEAP sign-in sheets submitted to CVWD.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Pre-Construction Survey for Nesting Birds: To the maximum extent practicable, construction activities shall avoid the nesting bird season (January 1 through July 31 for raptors and March 1 through September 15 for songbirds). This will avoid potential violations of the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513. However, if activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist. Nest surveys shall include the Project site and adjacent areas where construction activities have the potential to cause nest failure. If no nesting birds are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin as originally planned. If nesting birds (including nesting raptors) are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken. Measures shall include establishment of an avoidance buffer until nesting has been completed. The width of the buffer shall be determined by the qualified biologist. Typically, this is a minimum of 300 feet from the nest site in all directions (500 feet is typical for raptors), until juveniles have fledged and there has been no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. The qualified biologist will monitor the nest(s) during construction and document any findings.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS?

No Impact.

The Project site is located on a broad alluvial fan south of the Little San Bernardino Mountains (see Figure 4). The topography of the Project site and the surrounding vicinity is relatively flat to gently sloping and characterized by an expansive desert landscape generally comprised of sand, rocks, and creosote bush scrub. During rain events, the area becomes an ephemeral drainage and surface water percolates through pervious soils or empties to the Whitewater River / Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. The Project site does not include riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities; therefore, the implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact.

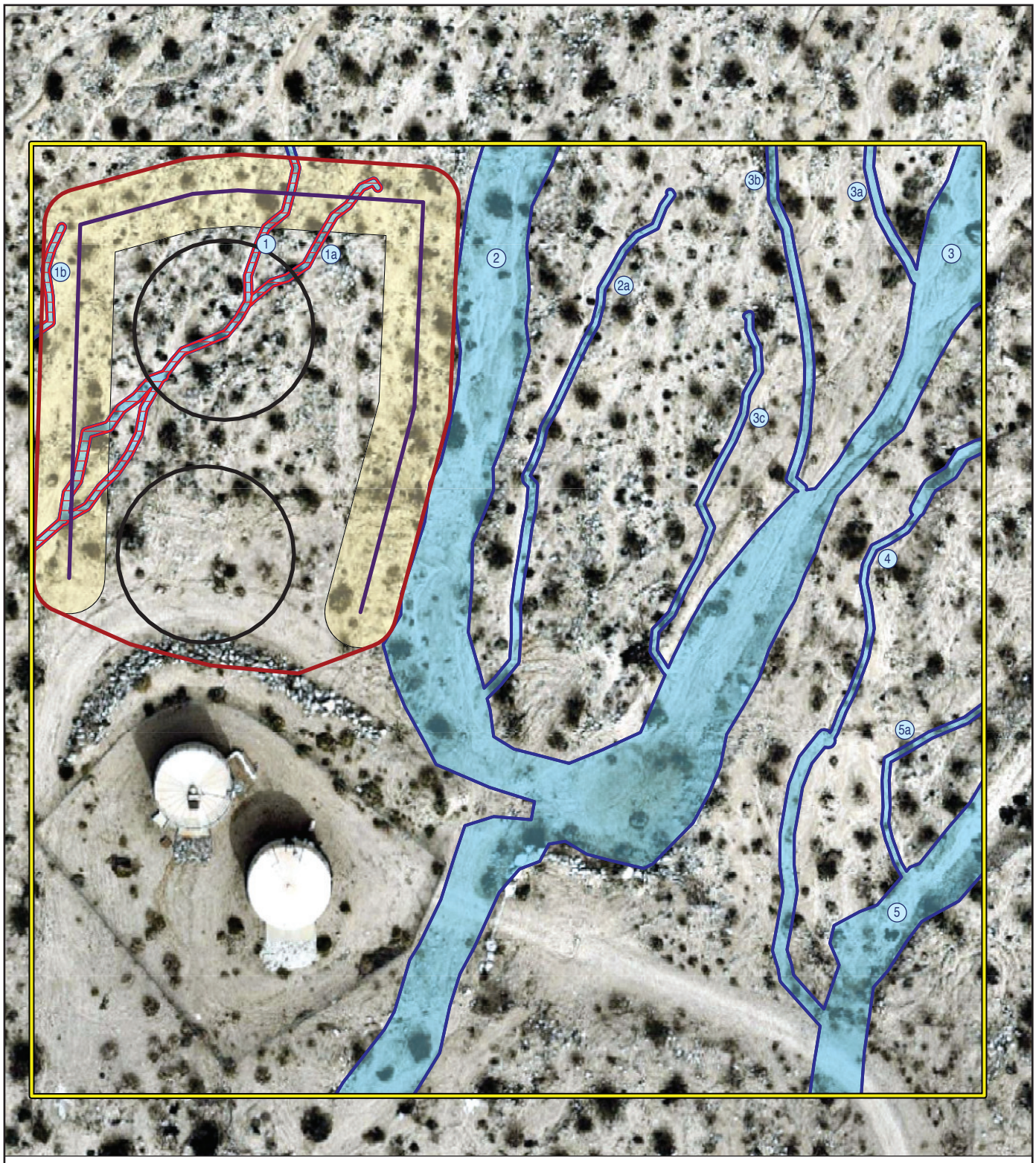
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

The construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks would involve excavation and grading within one or more of the defined streambed channels, which are aquatic and/or biological resources regulated by the RWQCB and CDFW. Based on the preliminary locations of 76-foot diameter foundations, which have been staked in the field, as well as the location of the proposed berm, the proposed tanks would impact approximately 0.38 acres of State-regulated waters.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 requires CVWD obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement as well as a Section 1602 LSAA from CDFW prior to the commencement of any construction activities. Compliance with the permit conditions (e.g., avoidance and minimization measures, restoration requirements, etc.) would ensure that the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse effect on State-regulated waters.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Clean Water Act and California Department of Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Permits: Prior to the commencement of construction, all appropriate applicable permits, such as a Clean Water Act Section 404, Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement, Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA), and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit shall be obtained. These permits may include avoidance and minimization measures as well as mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other regulated waters of the U.S. or State, and/or riparian habitat under jurisdiction of the CDFW at an appropriate mitigation ratio negotiated with the appropriate jurisdictional agencies (i.e., USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW, as necessary).



LEGEND

- (#) Drainage Number
- Potentially Jurisdictional Waters
- Project Disturbance Area
- Impacted Jurisdictional Waters (0.030 acres)
- Proposed Berm
- Buffer of Proposed Berm
- Proposed New Tank
- Survey Area

Aerial Source: Nearmap 2017.

SCALE IN FEET

0 60

N

wood.

Impacts to Jurisdictional Waters
Wetland Delineation

FIGURE 4

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?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located immediately adjacent to the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* and the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area*. The Project site does not intersect with this Conservation Area or any other major wildlife corridors (Wood 2021a). Further, due to the relatively small size of the 1.5-acre Project site and the undeveloped open space in the immediate vicinity, the proposed construction and operational activities – including installation of the perimeter chain-link fence – would not substantially interfere with the movement of wildlife species. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?

No Impact.

The Project site is designated as *Open Space-Rural (OS-RUR)* and zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)*.

Pursuant to Section 15.1(E)(1) of the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 348) this zoning designation provides for the conservation of water and the development of water storage and distribution infrastructure, such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells, and necessary pumping and water production facilities (County of Riverside 2019c). As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

The Project site is located within the CVMSHCP plan area adjacent to the *Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area* to the north and the *Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area* to the east (refer to Figure 3). These conservation areas contain significant habitat as well as potential linkages for wildlife corridors at the mouths of significant canyons. CVWD shall implement all relevant avoidance and minimization measures in CVWD's *Operations & Maintenance Manual* and the CVMSHCP's Land Use Adjacency Guidelines, including a worker education briefing for all construction personnel prior to initiation of ground-disturbing activities (refer to Mitigation Measure BIO-1).

The CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines are designed to avoid and minimize indirect effects to this conservation area. These guidelines include measures regarding drainage, toxics, lighting, noise, invasive species, barriers, and grading/land development. With the implementation of all relevant avoidance and minimization measures as well as the CVMSHCP Land Use

Adjacency Guidelines, the proposed Project would be considered consistent with the overall conservation goals of the CVMSHCP and there would be no impact to an adopted HCP with mitigation implemented.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) establishes a program for the conservation and protection of federally listed threatened and endangered plant and wildlife species and the preservation of habitats upon which they depend. Under Section 7 of the ESA, Federal agencies are required to consult with USFWS and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding potential "take" of threatened and endangered species.[1] The consultation is to ensure that Federal actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of any federally listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of federally designated critical habitat. When a Federal action cannot avoid federally designated critical habitat areas, the ESA requires mitigation measures or that reasonable and prudent alternatives be implemented to reduce an impact to minimal levels. Such mitigation measures or proposal alternatives must be negotiated between Federal agency and the USFWS or NMFS.

Issues related to federally listed species have been addressed in Section 14.4(a). There are no records of special-status plants or special-status wildlife occurring within or immediately adjacent to the Project site. Additionally, there is no federally designated critical habitat within the Project site or the immediate vicinity. Ground-disturbing activities associated with the construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks and demolition of the existing bolted-steel tanks would result in vegetation removal. As described in Section 14.13, *Noise*, noise associated with the proposed construction and demolition activities would also have the potential to disturb wildlife; however, these impacts would be short-term and temporary and would not persist beyond the 18-month construction period.

Additionally, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, along with CVWD's commitment to mitigation for CVMSHCP-covered activities outside of conservation areas, would effectively reduce potential adverse impacts to special-status species to less than significant levels.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BGEPA) prohibits the taking or harming (i.e., harassment, sale, or transportation) of bald eagles or golden eagles, including their eggs, nests, or young, without appropriate permit. Neither bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nor golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are known to occur within the Project site or adjacent conservation areas. Further, the Project site does not support trees which would provide nesting or roosting areas for bald or golden eagles. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would result in no impact with respect to the BGEPA.

[1] Section 3(18) of the ESA defines the term "take" as *"harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct."*

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Migratory birds, as listed in 50 CFR §10.13, are ecologically and economically important to recreational activities in the U.S., including bird watching, studying, feeding, and hunting. The MBTA provides for regulations to control taking of migratory birds, their nests, eggs, parts, or products without the appropriate permit and provides enforcement authority and penalties for violations. Additionally, in 2001, Executive Order (EO) 13186, *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, was issued to focus attention of Federal agencies on the environmental effects to migratory bird species and, where feasible, implement policies and programs, which support the conservation and protection of migratory birds.

The USDA RUS ER Checklist also requires consideration of potential impacts to important bird areas as identified by the National Audubon Society and critical area for use by shorebirds as identified by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). The Project site is not identified as an “important bird area” by the National Audubon Society (National Audubon Society 2020). Additionally, the Project site is not a critical area for use by shorebirds as identified by the WHSRN. The nearest critical area for shorebirds is the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, located more than 50 miles south along the Salton Sea (WHSRN 2020).

Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would require that construction activities avoid the nesting bird season (January 1 through July 31 for raptors and March 1 through September 15 for songbirds) to the maximum extent practicable. If activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist. If nesting birds (including nesting raptors) are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures would be implemented, including, but not limited to, establishment of an avoidance buffer until nesting has been completed. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2, potential impacts to migratory birds would be less than significant.

Protection of Wetlands

EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, requires that Federal agencies adopt a policy to avoid, to the extent possible, long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with destruction and modification of wetlands and to avoid the direct and indirect support of new construction in wetlands whenever there is a practicable alternative. In addition, USDA DR No. 9500-3, *Land Use Policy*, discourages the unwarranted alteration of wetlands. To meet this objective, consider alternatives to construction in wetlands and limit the potential damage when activity affecting a wetland cannot be avoided. Where wetlands cannot be avoided, permits from the USACE and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts to wetlands are required. Regulatory oversight of wetland issues fall under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and is administered by the USACE. Section 404 established a Federal permitting program that requires anyone who is proposing to place dredged or fill material into “waters of the U.S.” which includes wetlands must obtain a permit from the USACE.

Impacts to wetland have been addressed in Section 14.4(c). An ARD was prepared for the proposed Project in May 2020 to describe potential wetlands and jurisdictional drainages within or near the proposed Project site (see Appendix C). Wetlands and jurisdictional drainages were

mapped within the Project site through review of aerial photographs, topographic maps, the National Wetlands Inventory, soil mapping data, and historical streamflow using the USACE's wetland criteria parameters (i.e., the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology). The construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks would involve excavation and grading within one or more of the defined streambed channels, which are sensitive resources regulated by the RWQCB and CDFW. As such, impacts to State-regulated waters would occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Project. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, CVWD would obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement as well as a Section 1602 LSAA from CDFW prior to the commencement of any construction activities. Consultation and coordination with the applicable jurisdictional agencies as well as compliance with all required permit conditions (e.g., avoidance and minimization measures, restoration requirements, etc.) would ensure that the proposed Project would not result in significant adverse effect on federally regulated or State-regulated waters.

14.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

As described in Section 10, *Previous Environmental Documentation*, the Project site was included in a Cultural Resources Assessment prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015b), which included a survey of the area surrounding existing Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2. Additionally, a Project-specific Cultural Resources Assessment, including an intensive pedestrian field survey, was prepared at the request of USDA (see Appendix D).

The original Cultural Resources Assessment (CVWD 2015b) for the Project area included a historical archaeological resources records search and historical background research at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) University of California, Riverside. The results of EIC cultural resources and literature records search indicated that 11 cultural resources studies have been conducted previously within an approximately 1-mile radius of the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline alignment. The Project-specific Cultural Resources Assessment (Wood 2021b) identified four previously recorded archaeological resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project site including a prehistoric pot drop (P-33-8022), an isolate historical hole-in-cap can (P-33-8023), a historical unpaved access road (P-33-5755 / CA-RIV-5514H), and a historical debris scatter and

unpaved road beds associated with a 1930s-era Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) work camp (P-33-5756 / CA-RIV-5515H).

Additional sources consulted during the archaeological literature and records search include the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the Office of Historic Preservation Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility, and the Office of Historic Preservation Directory of Properties in the Historic Property Data File. There are no listed historic properties, historical resources, or historic landmarks recorded within the Project site – including the existing bolted-steel tanks, which were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999 (CVWD 2015b; Wood 2021b).

The original Cultural Resources Assessment (CVWD 2015b) and the Project-specific Cultural Resources Assessment (Wood 2021b) also included intensive pedestrian field surveys. Neither of these surveys identified prehistoric or historic-period archaeological resources within the Project site.

Would the Project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?

No Impact.

The results of EIC cultural resources and literature records search identified four previously recorded archaeological resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project site; including, a prehistoric pot drop (P-33-8022), an isolate historical hole-in-cap can (P-33-8023), a historical unpaved access road (P-33-5755 / CA-RIV-5514H), and a historical debris scatter and unpaved road beds associated with a 1930s-era CRA work camp (P-33-5756 / CA-RIV-5515H). However, no historical resources have been identified within the Project site (CVWD 2015b; Wood 2021b). Therefore, the proposed Project would have no potential to affect historical resources and no impact would occur.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

No prehistoric archaeological resources were identified during the intensive pedestrian field survey associated with the original Cultural Resources Assessment prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015b) or the Project-specific Cultural Resources Assessment (Wood 2021b). While a lack of surface evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources does not preclude their subsurface, no prehistoric archaeological resources have been previously recorded within or immediately adjacent to the Project site and only five prehistoric features have been previously recorded within a 1-mile radius. No previously undisturbed archaeological resources were observed in the APE during the pedestrian field surveys conducted as a part of the Cultural Resources Assessments (CVWD 2015b; Wood 2021b). In the unlikely event that potentially significant archaeological materials are encountered during Project-related ground-disturbing activities, implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1

and CR-2 would reduce potential impacts to previously unknown archaeological resources to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training: A cultural resources WEAP training shall be conducted by a registered professional archaeologist prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities associated with proposed Project. The purpose of the WEAP training is to educate construction personnel about the potential for cultural resources within the Project site and the measures to protect these resources if they are encountered. The WEAP shall explain the measures to avoid impact to cultural resources and the consequences of not complying with protective measures. The WEAP training shall be given to all construction personnel and copies of the WEAP sign-in sheets submitted to CVWD.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Inadvertent Discovery of Archaeological Resources: If subsurface deposits believed to be archaeological resources (e.g., stone tools, pottery, or milling-related artifacts like manos or metates, or historic-age resources such as cans or glass bottles) are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A registered professional archaeologist, meeting *The Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Prehistoric and Historic Archaeology*, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgement. If the registered professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent an archaeological resource, work may resume immediately and no agency notifications are required. If the registered professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent an archaeological resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify the Construction Inspector and CVWD environmental staff. CVWD shall consult on a finding of eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP and California Register of Historical Places (CRHR). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until CVWD determines, through consultation as appropriate, that the site is either: 1) not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

No known human remains exist at the Project site. As such, it is highly unlikely that the proposed Project would disturb known human remains. Nevertheless, although highly unlikely, if Native American resources or human remains are discovered during construction activities, implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-3 would reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measure CR-3: Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains: Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, if human remains are accidentally discovered or recognized during construction excavation and grading activities, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC would then identify the person(s) thought to be the Most Likely Descendent of the deceased Native American, who would then help

determine what course of action should be taken in dealing with the remains. Per Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, CVWD shall ensure that the immediate vicinity, according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, where the Native American human remains are located, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred, as prescribed in this section (Public Resources Code Section 5097.98), with the most likely descendants regarding their recommendations, if applicable, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

The principal Federal law addressing cultural resources is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA), and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800). Compliance with these regulations, commonly referred to as the Section 106 process, involves identifying and evaluating historic or potentially historic properties; assessing the effects of Federal actions on historic properties; and consulting to avoid, reduce, or minimize adverse effects. As part of the Section 106 process, proponent agencies are required to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The NHPA requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect their actions may have on historic properties that are within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for a Federal action. The area of potential effect is the geographic area or areas within which a proposal may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties. Historic properties means any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP. This term includes, for the purposes of the Section 106 regulations, artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term eligible for inclusion in the National Register includes both properties formally determined as such by the Secretary of the Interior and all other properties that meet NRHP listing criteria.

Archaeological resources comprise areas where prehistoric or historic activity measurably altered the environment or deposits of physical remains (e.g., lithic materials, ceramics, historic refuse, etc.) discovered therein. Architectural resources include standing buildings, districts, bridges, dams, and other structures of historic or aesthetic significance. Architectural resources generally must be more than 50 years old to be considered for inclusion in the NRHP, an inventory of culturally significant resources identified in the U.S.; however, more recent structures, such as Cold War-era resources, may also warrant protection if they have the potential to gain significance in the future. Traditional cultural resources can include archaeological resources, structures, neighborhoods, prominent topographic features, habitats, plants, wildlife, minerals that Native Americans or other groups consider essential for the persistence of traditional culture and properties.

As described in Section 14.5(a), of the original Cultural Resources Assessment (CVWD 2015b) as well as the Project-specific Cultural Resource Assessment (Wood 2021b) no historic period resources or prehistoric archaeological resources were identified. Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2 were constructed in 1993 and 1999 and are not eligible for listing on the NRHP. Therefore, construction of the proposed welded-steel tanks and the subsequent demolition of the existing bolted-steel tanks would result in *No Historic Properties Affected* under Section 106 of the NHPA (CVWD 2015b; Wood 2021b). In the unlikely event that previously unknown prehistoric

archaeological materials or human remains are encountered during Project-related ground-disturbing activities, implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-2 and CR-3 would reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.

14.6 ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

As described further in Section 14.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, Riverside County updated its the *Climate Action Plan (CAP)* in December 2019. The 2019 CAP refines the County's efforts to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies during the period between 2035 and 2050. Imperial Irrigation District (IID) provides electricity to the unincorporated community of Indio Hills – including the Project site (IID 2020). IID has become the sixth largest electrical utility in California serving more than 150,000 customers. IID's 6,471-square-mile service area covers all of Imperial County, along with part of Riverside County and San Diego County. Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas to the unincorporated community of Indio Hills – including the Project site.

Would the Project:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The scope of the proposed Project is limited to the replacement of two bolted-steel tanks and associated appurtenances and infrastructure in an otherwise undeveloped area of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. During proposed construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project, the consumption of energy resources would be limited to the use of water for dust suppression (refer to Section 14.3, *Air Quality*) and the consumption of fossil fuels (e.g., diesel, gasoline, etc.) from the operation of heavy construction equipment as well as heavy haul trucks and construction worker vehicles. Construction equipment would be staged on-site for the duration of Project-related construction and demolition, thereby minimizing vehicle trips to and from the Project site. The proposed Project would not require any unusual or excessive use of heavy construction equipment that could result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy compared to construction projects of similar type and size. In addition, the proposed Project would be required to comply with the *CARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations*, which would limit vehicle idling time to 5 minutes. As such,

construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during construction.

The proposed Project would generate a minor daily energy demand as a result of the electrically operated meters, mixing system, and other appurtenances associated with the proposed tanks. Additionally, the proposed Project would result in minor fossil fuel consumption associated with the routine inspection and maintenance activities. However, the energy demand associated with the proposed welded-steel tanks would generally be similar to that associated with the existing bolted-steel tanks. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact on energy resources.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would be required to comply with all applicable Federal and State energy requirements related to energy efficiency. The proposed Project would not generate significant GHG emissions and would not conflict with the County's *2019 CAP* (see Section 14.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*). Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Further, the proposed Project would improve existing efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of water storage and distribution facilities. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in no impact.

14.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause 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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
(ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Geology

The Project site is located in Southern California, which is a seismically active region at the junction of the North American and Pacific tectonic plates. Two of California's most active faults, the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults, are located within close proximity of the Project site. The San Andreas Fault runs through the Coachella Valley and is located approximately 4 miles west of the Project site. The San Jacinto Fault is a major strike-slip fault zone located approximately 30 miles southwest of the Project site (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 2019). Other active and potentially active fault zones in the vicinity of the Project site include the Blue Cut Fault, located approximately 6 miles northwest, and the Indio Hills Fault, located approximately 2 miles east (USGS 2019).

Geologic materials underlying the Project site and the surrounding vicinity may include:

- Holocene-age, fine-grained unconsolidated sediments, including stream-, gravity-, lake-, and wind-deposited sediments. Deposits in this category include stream channel, alluvial fan, flood plain, colluvial dune, and lacustrine sediments;

- Pleistocene-age, fine-grained, unconsolidated-to-moderately consolidated sediments; and

- Tertiary-age and older, fine-grained soft rock, and moderately consolidated to indurated sediments. Bedding or fractures in these sediments are assumed to provide planes of weakness along which slope instability could occur (County of Riverside 2015a).

Soils

As described in *Environmental Setting*, soils within the Project site are comprised of well-drained Carrizo stony sand (2 to 9 percent slopes) (USDA 2020). Carrizo soils occur on various landforms, including alluvial fans. They are excessively drained and generally support creosote bush, burrowbush, and range ratany (*Krameria erecta*) (refer to Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*).

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources include fossils or assemblages of fossils that are unique, unusual, rare, uncommon, diagnostically or stratigraphically important, and those that add to an existing body of knowledge in specific areas, stratigraphically, taxonomically, or regionally. They include fossil remains of large to very small aquatic and terrestrial vertebrates, remains of plants and animals previously not represented in certain portions of the stratigraphy, and assemblages of fossils that might aid stratigraphic correlations, particularly those offering data for the interpretation of tectonic events, geomorphologic evolution, paleoclimatology, and the relationships of aquatic and terrestrial species (County of Riverside 2002).

The Project site is located in the Salton Trough, a large tectonic depression that includes the Coachella and Imperial Valleys of Southern California, and the western half of the Mexicali Valley and the Colorado River delta in Mexico (Alles 2011). Over the past 4.5 million years, the Salton Trough has been periodically inundated with fresh and brackish waters, influenced by the Gulf of California, the Colorado River, and ancient Lake Cahuilla. Lake Cahuilla was a former freshwater lake that periodically occupied a major portion of the Salton Trough during the Holocene, approximately 10,000 to 240 years ago (Deméré 2002).

Would the Project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause 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?

No Impact.

The Project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and no known active faults traverse the Project site. As previously described, the closest active faults to the Project site are the Indio Hills Fault, located approximately 2 miles to the east, the San Andreas Fault located approximately 4 miles to the west, the Blue Cut Fault, located approximately 6 miles to the northwest and the San Jacinto Fault, located approximately 30 miles to the southwest (California Geological Survey 2016). Ground rupture generally only affects the area immediately adjacent to a fault and the Project site is sufficiently far enough away from the nearest active fault to be considered not at risk of fault rupture. The potential for seismic ground shaking hazards associated with large earthquake events is described in Section 14.7(a)(ii).

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located in close proximity of two active fault zones, and therefore would be subject to seismic ground shaking in the event of an earthquake. The proposed construction activities – including excavation and grading – would comply with all applicable County grading permit conditions. If necessary, excavation activities would include appropriate shorings (i.e., temporary supports) to minimize the potential for collapse during an earthquake. Similarly, the proposed demolition activities would comply with all applicable County demolition permit conditions. All elements of the proposed Project including the proposed welded-steel tanks and buried pipelines would be designed in conformance with seismic engineering standards to reduce potential damage in the event of seismic ground shaking. Conformance with standard engineering practices and design criteria (e.g., California Building Code) would reduce potential impacts related to property damage from seismic ground shaking to less than significant levels. Additionally, no habitable structures are proposed and therefore, the proposed Project would not place people at risk of significant effects from seismic ground shaking, such as risk of injury, or death. While the Project site would be subject to seismic ground shaking during future earthquakes, impacts would be less than significant.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No Impact.

Liquefaction occurs when saturated, cohesionless soils temporarily lose shear strength (liquefy) due to increased pore water pressures induced by strong, cyclic ground motion during an earthquake. The Project site is not located within a liquefaction zone as designated by the California Geological Survey and the County's General Plan (California Geological Survey 2018; County of Riverside 2019d). However, the Riverside County General Plan does consider the surrounding Project site and the surrounding vicinity to have a moderate liquefaction susceptibility (County of Riverside 2019d). The proposed Project would replace the existing bolted-steel tanks and would neither involve the construction of any habitable structures nor change the existing land use type (e.g., to a residential or commercial land use) at the Project site that would result potential safety hazards. Further, potential impacts related to liquefaction and lateral spreading would be readily avoided through conformance with standard engineering practices and design criteria for the proposed Project components (e.g., California Building Code). Such practices were successfully implemented with the construction of the existing bolted-steel tanks, which were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact.

The Project site is not located within a Landslide Zone (California Geological Survey 2018); the Project site is located in a generally flat to gently sloping valley floor with mountain ranges located at a distance of 2 miles or greater. As such, the proposed Project would not create potentially adverse effects related to landslide risks and the proposed Project would have no impact.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The proposed Project could result in minor soil erosion during construction activities due to ground disturbance associated with excavation, grading, and construction of infrastructure associated with the proposed welded-steel tanks (e.g., riprap revetment). As described in Section 6, *Project Description* excavation would be required for the construction of two 60-foot diameter by 5-foot deep foundations. Additional trenching would be required for the installation of an 18-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipeline that would provide a connection between the proposed tanks and the existing Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline. In total, proposed grading activities would disturb an approximately 1.5-acre area – and would require approximately 4,840 cy of earthwork. All construction activities associated with the proposed Project would be required to comply with standard engineering practices for erosion control. Further, construction of the proposed Project would include BMPs as specified in the SWPPP to control erosion of exposed soils. BMPs included in the SWPPP may include but would not be limited to limitations on construction during high winds, covering soil stockpiles, watering exposed soils (refer to Section 14.3, *Air Quality*). With implementation of these BMPs, any minor potential for soil erosion impacts or topsoil loss during the proposed construction activities would be effectively avoided. Following construction, operation of the proposed welded-steel tanks would not differ substantially from the existing bolted-steel tanks. Overall, impacts related to erosion or the loss of topsoil as a result of the proposed Project would be less than significant.

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?

No Impact.

As described in Section 14.7(a)(ii) and (iii), the Project site is not located in a Landslide Zone or at risk of liquefaction. The Project site is relatively flat land and no steep slopes are immediately adjacent to the Project site. Carrizo stony sand (2 to 9 percent slopes) is well drained and not prone to liquefaction (USDA 2020). Further, any potential impacts related to geological instability including lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be addressed through standard practices described in the California Building Code. Therefore, no impacts related to soil instability resulting in landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse would occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Project.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the 1994 California Building Code 1997, creating substantial risks to life or property?

No Impact.

As previously described, the Project site is characterized by Carrizo stony sand (2 to 9 percent slopes), which is not known to be expansive. This soil has supported the existing bolted-steel tanks since their original construction in 1993 and 1999. Further, no habitable structures are proposed and the proposed Project would not place people at risk of significant effects, such as risk of injury or death. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in no impact.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would not require the use of septic tanks or wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, there would be no impact as a result of the proposed Project.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

The Project site is located within the Whitewater River watershed and is traversed by defined streambed channels which are generally dry throughout the year but convey water from upstream areas during storm events (WEST Consultants, Inc. 2020). The Project site is located on a broad alluvial fan north of the Salton Sea and in an area with a high potential for occurrence of paleontological resources (County of Riverside 2002).[2] As such, excavation and grading activities associated with the proposed Project could disturb paleontological resources underlying the Project site. For example, excavation activities would result excavations up to a depth of 5 feet. Nevertheless, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 impacts to paleontological resources would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training: A paleontological resources WEAP training shall be conducted by a qualified paleontological monitor prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities associated with proposed Project. The purpose of the WEAP training is to educate construction personnel about the potential for paleontological resources within the Project site and the measures to protect these resources if they are encountered. The WEAP shall explain the measures to avoid impact to paleontological resources and the consequences of not complying with protective measures. The WEAP training shall be given to all construction personnel and copies of the WEAP sign-in sheets submitted to CVWD.

Mitigation Measure GEO-2: Inadvertent Discovery of Paleontological Resources: The qualified paleontological monitor shall be present during the first day of grading activities to visually inspect the excavated or graded areas and trench sidewalls. The monitor shall make recommendations on subsequent monitoring based on observations during that initial phase. If paleontological resources are encountered during the course of construction and monitoring, CVWD shall halt or divert work and notify a qualified paleontologist who shall document the

[2] High Potential is defined in the EIR for the General Plan as *"Sedimentary rock units with high potential for containing significant non-renewable paleontological resources include rock units in which vertebrate or significant invertebrate fossils have been found or determined likely to be present. These units include, but are not limited to, sedimentary formations which contain significant nonrenewable paleontological resources anywhere within their geographical extent and sedimentary rock units temporally or lithologically suitable for the preservation of fossils. High sensitivity includes not only the potential for yielding abundant vertebrate fossils, but also for production of a few significant fossils that may provide new and significant data."*

discovery as needed, evaluate the potential resource, assess the significance of the find, and develop an appropriate treatment plan in consultation with CVWD. At a minimum, the monitor will assign a unique field number to each specimen identified; photograph the specimen and its geographic and stratigraphic context along with a scale near the specimen and its field number clearly visible in close-ups; record the location using a global positioning system (GPS) unit with accuracy greater than 1 foot horizontally and vertically (if such equipment is not available, horizontal measurements and bearings to nearby permanent features or accurately surveyed benchmarks, and vertical measurements by sighting level to points of known elevation will be used); record the field number and associated specimen data (identification by taxon and element, etc.) and corresponding geologic and geographic site data (e.g., location, elevation, etc.) in the field notes and in a daily monitoring report; stabilize and prepare all fossils for identification; identify to lowest taxonomic level possible by paleontologists, qualified and experienced in the identification of that group of fossils; and record on the outside of the container or bag the specimen number and taxonomic identification, if known.

14.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

GHGs trap heat in the atmosphere, creating an increase in average global temperatures. Human activities that produce GHGs include the burning of fossil fuels (e.g., coal, oil, and natural gas for heating and electricity, gasoline and diesel for transportation); methane (CH_4) from landfill wastes and livestock, deforestation activities, and some agricultural practices. The principal GHGs that enter the atmosphere because of human activities are:

- **Carbon dioxide (CO_2)** enters the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (i.e., oil, natural gas, and coal), agriculture, irrigation, and deforestation, as well as the manufacturing of cement.

- **Methane (CH_4)** is emitted through the production and transportation of coal, natural gas, and oil, as well as from livestock. Other agricultural activities (e.g., ranching, dairy production, and fertilizer) influence CH_4 emissions as well as the decay of waste in landfills.

- **Nitrous oxide (N_2O)** is released most often during the burning of fuel at high temperatures. This GHG is caused mostly by motor vehicles, which also include non-road vehicles, such as those used for agriculture.

- **Fluorinated Gases** are emitted primarily from industrial sources, which often include hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). Though they are often released in smaller quantities, they are referred to as High Global Warming Potential Gases because of their ability to cause global warming.

These gases have different potentials for trapping heat in the atmosphere, called global warming potential (GWP). For example, 1 pound of CH_4 has 21 times more heat capturing potential than 1 pound of CO_2. When dealing with an array of emissions, the gases are converted to carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e) for comparison purposes. The analysis for this IS uses the screening threshold recommended by the SCAQMD working group of 3,000 million tons of CO_2e per year (MT CO_2e/yr).

Assembly Bill (AB) 32 is a California State Law that establishes a comprehensive program to reduce GHG emissions from all sources throughout the State. AB 32 requires CARB to develop regulations and market mechanisms to reduce California's GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, representing a 25-percent reduction Statewide, with mandatory caps beginning in 2012 for significant emissions sources.

As previously described in Section 14.2 *Air Quality*, Riverside County updated its the *2015 CAP* in December 2019 and approved the new *2019 CAP* on December 17, 2019. The *2019 CAP* refines the County's efforts to meet GHG reduction strategies, specifically for the years 2035 and 2050. The County CAP GHG inventory included GHG emissions resulting from Water Supply, including GHG emissions resulting from energy used to pump/transport these imported sources of water from their sources to Riverside County. The CAP includes GHG emissions reduction programs and regulations, which include the following measures to reduce GHG emissions from purchased water:

- Measure R1-W1: Renewable Portfolio Standard Related to Water Supply and Conveyance. Increase electricity production from eligible renewable power sources to 33 percent by 2020, 60 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2045.

- Measure R2-W1: Water Efficiency through Enhanced Implementation of Senate Bill (SB). X7-7 SB X7-7, or the Water Conservation Act of 2009, requires all water suppliers to increase water use efficiency. The legislation set an overall goal of reducing per capita urban water consumption by 20 percent from a baseline level by 2020. The County can support this goal by taking the following actions:

    - Provide general water efficiency information and links to water district conservation webpages on the County's website.

    - Implement the low-irrigation landscaping requirements.

- R2-W2: Exceed Water Efficiency Standards. These efforts include education and outreach practices that could be combined with residential and commercial actions that promote reuse or recycled water, use of grey water, and the collection and use of harvested rainwater. Potential actions for this measure include:

- Support water districts in direct outreach to homeowner associations, businesses, and other community groups to inform them on water efficiency standards.
- Promote recycled or grey water for community uses such as residential landscaping.
- Promote rainwater harvesting rebates and demonstrations.

Most projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to directly influence climate change by any noticeable degree; however, a project can contribute incrementally to cumulative effects that are significant. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[h][1]).

Would the Project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact.

As described in Section 14.3, *Air Quality*, the proposed Project would generate vehicle trips related to soil export, demolition debris removal, materials delivery, and construction worker commutes, which would occur throughout the 18-month construction period. Heavy construction equipment use, heavy haul trucks trips, and construction worker vehicle trips were included in the CalEEMod analysis to conservatively estimate the potential emissions for the proposed Project (see Table 8). Pursuant to SCAQMD Guidelines, construction emissions have been amortized over a period of 30-years. According to the CalEEMod analysis, implementation of the Project would result in a total of 415.18 MT CO_2e/yr during the 18-month construction period. Therefore, the Project's total GHG emissions would be well below the applicable screening threshold of 3,000 MT CO_2e/yr.

Table 8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

		MT CO_2e/yr
Construction Emissions		415.18
Operational Emissions		0.14
Total Emissions		415.32
	Screening Threshold:	3,000
	Exceed Threshold?	No

Note: Construction emissions have been amortized over 30 years in accordance with SCAQMD Guidance.
Source: Wood 2020 (see Appendix A).

Once operational, the proposed Project would require routine inspections and maintenance, which would generate a relatively small amount of GHG emissions from vehicle trips and maintenance activities (e.g., application of architectural coatings). The increase in energy demand associated with the proposed 1MG welded-steel tanks would be negligible (refer to Section 14.6,

Energy). Therefore, indirect GHG emissions from the energy supply associated with the proposed Project would be negligible and impacts would be less than significant.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would replace two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. The proposed Project does not include any new uses or facilities that would generate a substantial increase in operational GHG emissions. The proposed Project would not interfere with existing State, County, regional, or local programs intended to reduce energy and improve water use efficiency. It would not result in emissions higher than SCAQMD significance screening thresholds. It would also support Riverside County's CAP goal increasing water use efficiency by replacing the deteriorating water storage infrastructures with new, reliable facilities. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact.

14.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to develop and annually update the Hazardous Waste and Substances List – Site Cleanup (Cortese) List. Information on the location of hazardous material sites contained in the Cortese List is provided by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). A review of the Cortese List indicates that there are no identified hazardous materials release sites located within the Project site or immediate vicinity (DTSC 2020). In addition, a review of the DTSC EnviroStor Database did not indicate any cleanup sites or hazardous waste facilities within the vicinity of the Project site.

The nearest schools are Desert Ridge Academy Middle School and Shadow Hills High School in Indio and Xavier Preparatory High School in Palm Desert, approximately 10 miles southwest of the Project site. All of the other public schools are located southwest of I-10. The nearest public airport, is Palm Springs International Airport, located approximately 17 miles west of the Project site. Bermuda Dunes Airport is located approximately 7 miles south of the Project site. As such, the Project site is located outside of identified airport land use plan areas. CAL FIRE has designated the Project site as a *Local Responsibility Area Moderate Hazard Severity Zone* (CAL FIRE 2020).[3,4]

Would the Project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact.

During construction, limited quantities of typical construction-related hazardous materials would be brought onto and stored at the Project site, including vehicle fuels (e.g., diesel and gasoline), hydraulic fluids, and paint. Materials delivery and other heavy construction equipment supporting the construction activities would access the Project site via Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, and Sunny Rock Road, along the edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills and thereby avoiding rural residences to the maximum extent feasible. The transport and use of hazardous construction materials would be short-term in nature and all transport, handling, and disposal of such substances would comply with applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety regulations, including Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 6.5, Article 6.6, and Article 13 of the California Health and Safety Code and 40 CFR Part 263, that regulate the transport, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. The proposed Project would also implement standard construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP required in accordance with the NPDES Construction General Permit to control the discharge of material from the site (see Section 14.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*). As discussed in Section 14.3, *Air Quality*, construction of the proposed Project would involve the use of heavy construction equipment that would result in the emission of diesel particulate matter (DPM); however, given the scope of the proposed Project as well as the distance from existing

[3] Wildland fire protection in California is the responsibility of either the State, local government, or the Federal government. Local responsibility areas include incorporated cities, cultivated agriculture lands, and portions of the desert. Local responsibility area fire protection is typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, counties, and by CAL FIRE under contract to local government.

[4] California law requires CAL FIRE to identify areas based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail there. These areas, or "zones," are based on factors such as fuel (i.e., material that can burn), slope, and fire weather. There are three zones, based on increasing fire hazard: medium, high, and very high.

sensitive receptors, DPM emissions would not be considered hazardous. Long-term operational activities (e.g., routine inspections and maintenance) would not create a substantial hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts associated with the proposed Project would be less than significant.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

The proposed Project may result in a potential risk of upset or accidental release of fuel (e.g., diesel and gasoline) and/or hydraulic fluid during the use of heavy construction equipment within the Project site. However, all transport, handling, and disposal of such substances would comply with all Federal, State, and local laws regulating the management and use of hazardous materials. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would require CVWD to obtain all required permits, including a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirement as well as a Section 1602 LSAA prior to commencement of any construction activities. These permits would include standard construction BMPs (e.g., off-site fueling and maintenance of construction equipment), which would be in place for the duration of construction to ensure the proper use and storage of potentially hazardous materials. CVWD would be required to develop and implement a SWPPP pursuant the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit to ensure that reasonably foreseeable risks of upset involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment are avoided and minimized. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, there would be minimal potential for the release of hazardous materials into the environment during long-term operations associated with the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact.

As previously described no schools occur within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project site. Further, as described in Sections 14.9(a) and 14.9(b), the types and quantities of hazardous materials to be transported and stored at the Project site are not acutely hazardous and would not pose an immediate and significant risk to health. The proposed Project would not result in adverse impacts related to hazardous emissions, materials, substances, or waste.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact.

The Project site is not included on the DTSC Cortese List, EnviroStor database or any other list of sites containing hazardous materials (DTSC 2020). The proposed Project would not disturb

any sites that would create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment and therefore, would have no impact.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact.

As previously described, the Project site is not located within 2 miles of a public airport or within an airport land use plan. The nearest public airport is Palm Springs International Airport, located approximately 17 miles west of the Project site. Bermuda Dunes Airport is located approximately 7 miles south of the Project site. Therefore, given the distance of the Project site from the nearest airports, the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of the Project site.

f) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact.

Construction and operation of the proposed Project would not affect an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. All construction activities would occur within the Project site which is located approximately 0.5 miles from the nearest development along 30th Avenue. The Project site is accessible by an unnamed, unpaved, and gated access road used by authorized personnel during inspection and maintenance activities. The Project site is not publicly accessible and does not support habitable structures that would need to be evacuated in the event of an emergency. The proposed Project would not result in a significant increase in traffic congestion during construction or operation that might impede mobility along Dillon Road during an emergency (see Section 14.17, *Transportation* and Section 14.20, *Wildfire*). The proposed Project would not result in a physical obstruction or close any street or highway that is critical to evacuation in the event of an emergency during construction or operation.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact.

Construction and operation of the proposed Project would not result in exposure of people or structures to risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. The proposed Project would be limited to the replacement of two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks and would not include the construction of inhabitable structures. (See Section 14.20, *Wildfire* for additional discussion regarding the potential for wildfire at the Project site.)

14.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off-site;	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iii) 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; or	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Surface Water

The Project site is located within the Whitewater River watershed, which encompasses the entire Coachella Valley (see Figure 5). The drainage area of the Whitewater River watershed is approximately 57.5 square miles and includes four sub-watersheds: Morongo, Shavers, San Gorgonio, and Coachella. The Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, which is the primary drainage course in the watershed, runs southeast through the Coachella Valley and drains to the Salton Sea.

wood.

Watersheds
Indio Hills, Riverside County, California

FIGURE 5

The principal tributaries of the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel include the San Gorgonio River, Snow Creek, Falls Creek, Chino Creek, Mission Creek, Morongo Creek, Tahquitz Creek, Andreas Creek, Palm Canyon Wash, Deep Canyon Creek, and the Palm Valley Channel.

The Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (RWQCB 1993, amended January 2019) designates water quality standards for the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel in the form of beneficial uses and numeric and narrative water quality objectives. Beneficial uses of the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel include:

- Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH);
- Contact Water Recreation (REC I; unauthorized use);
- Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC II; unauthorized use);
- Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM);
- Wildlife Habitat (WILD); and
- Preservation of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE).

Currently, within the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, the 17-mile segment from Dillon Road to the Salton Sea is listed on the State's 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies for Pathogens (USEPA 2011). The RWQCB develops and implements total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) to address these impairments and help achieve water quality standards. Water quality is also addressed through compliance with the NPDES stormwater discharge permits issued to municipalities, commercial and industrial facilities, and construction sites to control pollutants in storm water discharges to local surface waters.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program provides Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) that identify flood hazard areas, called Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). SFHAs are defined as areas that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1-percent chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood. SFHAs are labeled as Zone A, Zone AO, Zone AH, Zones A1-30, Zone AE, Zone A99, Zone AR, Zone AR/AE, Zone AR/AO, Zone AR/A1-A30, Zone AR/A, Zone V, Zone VE, and Zones V1-V30. Moderate flood hazard areas, labeled Zone B or Zone X (shaded), are also shown on the FIRM and are areas between the limits of base flood and the 0.2-percent annual chance flood (i.e., 500-year flood). The areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent annual chance flood, are labeled Zone C or Zone X (unshaded) (FEMA 2021). The Project site is located on a Flood Zone D. The Zone D designation is used for areas where there are possible but undetermined flood hazards, as no analysis of flood hazards has been conducted.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) created 1-percent annual chance flood (i.e., 100-year flood) maps for many areas that FEMA had not studied. The County of Riverside is one of the few jurisdictions that have adopted these maps for regulatory purposes. Riverside County Ordinance No. 458 regulates development and substantial improvements within a regulatory floodplain (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 2020). Any development or substantial improvement within a regulated floodplain may require a separate application for a floodplain review. Although the Project site is not located in a FEMA-identified

flood hazards zone, the Project site is located in a DWR Awareness Flood Area (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 2020).[5]

Stormwater runoff from the Project site and the surrounding vicinity drains from the surrounding foothills and mountains through washes and is captured on roadsides in a system of drainage channels. Wood prepared an 8-Step Floodplain Analysis which determined that the 100-year flow approaching the revetment would be approximately 779 cfs with a flow depth of 1.14 feet (Wood 2021c; see Appendix F). The riprap revetment would be constructed to provide at least 1 foot of freeboard and would involve approximately 278 cy of grading, including the use of boulders and other materials from the existing riprap revetment.

Groundwater

The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Basin No. 7-21) underlies the Whitewater River watershed. The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin has an estimated storage capacity of almost 40 million acre-feet (AF) of water within the upper 1,000 feet (CVWD 2016). The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is divided into four subbasins: Indio (DWR Basin No. 7-21.01), Mission Creek (DWR Basin No. 7-21.02), Desert Hot Springs (DWR Basin No. 721.03), and San Gorgonio (DWR Basin No. 7-21.04). The Desert Hot Springs Subbasin underlies the Project site and the surrounding vicinity.

Seasonal runoff draining from the Little San Bernardino Mountains recharges the subbasin by percolating through the underlying water bearing coalescing alluvial fan deposits. Surface runoff, from high precipitation or snow-melt, is contained by intermittent creeks that discharge into the subbasin (DWR 1964).

The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is designated by DWR as a *low priority basin* and no management requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The RWQCB's designated beneficial uses of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin include Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN), Industrial Service Supply (IND), and Agriculture Supply (AGR). Groundwater supply used for potable uses is generally of high quality; however, CVWD treats delivered groundwater with free chlorine as a precautionary measure prior to distribution for potable use. The Desert Hots Springs Subbasin has elevated levels of minerals, including fluoride, that occur naturally and do not meet drinking water standards for potable use.

Would the Project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less Than Significant Impact.

[5] The intent of the DWR's Awareness Floodplain Mapping project is to identify all pertinent flood hazard areas by 2015 for areas that are not mapped under FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and to provide the community and residents an additional tool in understanding potential flood hazards currently not mapped as a regulated floodplain.

Potential water quality impacts associated with construction of the proposed Project would be limited to short-term erosion and any associated siltation that could potentially occur during and following ground-disturbing activities, including excavation and grading. In total, implementation of the proposed Project would require ground disturbance on an approximately 1.5-acre area and would require approximately 4,840 cy of earthwork. Construction of the proposed Project would require coverage under the SWRCB's NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity – Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009DWQ). The Construction General Permit would require the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP containing BMPs to control sediment and other construction-related pollutants in storm water discharges. Such BMPs may include, but are not limited to, general housekeeping practices such as proper waste disposal procedures, use of tarps on any soil stockpiles, containment of debris materials (e.g., using straw waddles and/or silt fencing), and inspection for leaks and spills from construction vehicles and equipment. With implementation of the SWPPP, storm water discharges from the Project site during construction are not expected to violate existing water quality standards or waste discharge requirements set by the RWQCB.

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

No Impact.

Short-term water demand for construction-related activities (e.g., dust suppression) would be consistent with typical construction projects and would occur over a relatively small area (i.e., 1.5 acres). Given the limited scope of the proposed Project, this short-term demand would have a negligible effect on local groundwater supplies. The proposed Project does not include new housing or development that would induce population growth and generate a greater demand for groundwater. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact on long-term groundwater supplies, groundwater recharge, or aquifers.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Refer to Section 14.7(b). The proposed Project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

No Impact.

The replacement of the existing 35-foot diameter bolted-steel tanks with the proposed 60-foot diameter welded-steel tanks would increase impervious surface area on the Project site. However, this 3,574-sf increase in surface area would be negligible and would not

result in substantial increases in the rate or amount of surface runoff that would result in flooding. The proposed Project would include construction of a riprap revetment upstream of the proposed reservoirs to protect the Project site and the proposed welded-steel tanks from flooding. The surrounding areas are undeveloped and, as such, construction of the proposed riprap revetment would not result in potential impacts associated with flooding off-site. The impact of the proposed Project on the elevation and velocity of the 100- and 500-year flood would be negligible (Wood 2021c; see Appendix F). Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would result in no impacts.

iii) 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?

No Impact.

Refer to Section 14.10(c)(ii). The proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surface area to the point of runoff exceeding the capacity of existing drainage systems. The proposed Project would not create a new source of polluted runoff. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact to stormwater runoff and water quality.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The Project site is located in an area of undetermined flood hazard (Zone D) (FEMA 2021). However, the Project site is located in a DWR Awareness Flood Area and subject to regulation under Riverside County Ordinance No. 458. As such, the proposed Project may require a separate application for a floodplain review which would include the preparation of a Floodplain Management Plan by a licensed civil engineer (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 2020). As previously described, the proposed Project would include construction of a berm to provide flood protection and redirect runoff. Wood prepared an 8-Step Floodplain Analysis which determined that the 100-year flow approaching the revetment would be approximately 779 cfs with a flow depth of 1.14 feet (Wood 2021c; see Appendix F). The riprap revetment would be constructed to provide at least 1 foot of freeboard and would involve approximately 278 cy of grading, including the use of boulders and other materials from the existing riprap revetment. Although runoff would be redirected around the Project site – similar to conditions with the current revetment established for the existing tanks – the braided nature of the washes and streambeds enable such runoff to rejoin existing drainages. Reconfiguration of the revetment at the Project site would have a less negligible impact on the elevation and velocity of the 100- and 500-year flood and the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Refer to Section 14.10(c) for a discussion of flood hazard on the Project site and in the surrounding vicinity. No topographical features or water bodies capable of producing seiche or

tsunami exist within the Project vicinity. As described in Section 14.10(c), implementation of the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts with respect to release of pollutants due to flood hazards.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Although the proposed Project would increase impervious surfaces at the Project site, the increased surface area would be negligible and would not act as a source of polluted runoff. Additionally, construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would improve water storage and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone. Therefore, the Project would not impact or otherwise affect compliance with a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

The CWA establishes Federal limits, through the NPDES program, on the amounts of specific pollutants that can be discharged into surface waters to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the water. The NPDES program regulates the discharge of point (i.e., end of pipe) and nonpoint sources (i.e., stormwater) of water pollution.

The California NPDES stormwater program requires construction site operators engaged in clearing, grading, and excavating activities that disturb 1 acre or more to obtain coverage under an NPDES Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges. Construction or demolition that necessitates an individual permit also requires preparation of a Notice of Intent to discharge stormwater and a SWPPP that is implemented during construction. As part of the 2010 Final Rule for the CWA, *Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Construction and Development Point Source Category*, activities covered by this permit must implement non-numeric erosion and sediment controls and pollution prevention measures.

Construction-related water quality issues are addressed in Section 14.10(a). Potential water quality impacts would be limited to short-term erosion and any associated siltation that could potentially occur during and following ground-disturbing activities, including excavation and grading. In total, implementation of the proposed Project would require ground disturbance on an approximately 1.5-acre area and would require approximately 4,840 cy of earthwork. Construction of the proposed Project would require coverage under the SWRCB's NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity – Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009DWQ). The Construction General Permit would require the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP containing BMPs to control sediment and other construction-related pollutants in storm water discharges.

EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, requires Federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development unless it is the only

practicable alternative. Flood potential of a site is usually determined by the 100-year floodplain, which is defined as the area that has a 1 percent chance of inundation by a flood event in a given year. In compliance with EO 11988, *Floodplain Management*, and USDA DR 9500-3, *Land Use Policy*, it is USDA's policy to avoid to the extent possible:

1. The long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and

2. Direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.

Refer to Section 14.10(c) provides a discussion of flood hazard on the Project site and in the surrounding vicinity. The Project site is located in an area of undetermined flood hazard (Zone D) (FEMA 2021). However, the Project site is located in a DWR Awareness Flood Area and subject to regulation under Riverside County Ordinance No. 458. As such, the proposed Project may require a separate application for a floodplain review which would include the preparation of a Floodplain Management Plan by a licensed civil engineer (Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 2020). Wood prepared an 8-Step Floodplain Analysis which determined that the 100-year flow approaching the revetment would be approximately 779 cfs with a flow depth of 1.14 feet (Wood 2021c; see Appendix F). The riprap revetment would be constructed to provide at least 1 foot of freeboard and would involve approximately 278 cy of grading, including the use of boulders and other materials from the existing riprap revetment. Although runoff would be redirected around the Project site – similar to conditions with the current revetment established for the existing tanks – the braided nature of the washes and streambeds enable such runoff to rejoin existing drainages. Reconfiguration of the revetment at the Project site would have a less negligible impact on the elevation and velocity of the 100- and 500-year flood and the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts.

14.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Project site is located in the unincorporated community of Indio Hills within Riverside County on a 3.67-acre property owned by CVWD.

As described in Section 4, *General Plan Designation*, the Land Use Element of the County's General Plan designates the Project site as *Open Space-Rural (OS-RUR)* (County of Riverside 2019b). The *OS-RUR* designation is applied to remote, privately owned open space areas with

limited access and a general lack of public services. As described in Section 5, *Zoning*, the Project site is zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)*. Pursuant to Section 15.1(E)(1) of the Riverside County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 348) this zoning designation provides for the conservation of water and the development of water storage and distribution infrastructure, such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells, and necessary pumping and water production facilities (County of Riverside 2019c).

Would the Project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact.

All construction activities and operational activities associated with the proposed Project would be limited to the Project site and contained within the 3.67-acre CVWD-owned property; the proposed Project would not encroach on surrounding land uses or roadways. The Project site is located approximately 0.5 miles from the nearest rural residential development along 30th Avenue. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not divide an established community and no impact would occur.

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact.

As previously described, the Project site is zoned as *Controlled Development Areas Zone (W-2-10)*. The proposed 1MG welded-steel tanks would continue to be consistent with intended land use and would not conflict with the County's General Plan policies or any zoning designation for the Project site. Further, as previously described, the proposed Project would not conflict with the CVMSHCP (refer to Section 14.4[f]). Therefore, there would be no potential conflicts with a land use plan and no Project-related impacts.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*, decisions concerning land use arise from needs to accommodate needed growth and development; prevent unwarranted and costly sprawl; avoid unwarranted conversion of farmland and wetlands from existing uses; encroachment on floodplains; provide or improve community services and facilities; assure appropriate environmental quality; assure adequate supplies of suitable-quality water; and provide for proper waste disposal in rural areas. It is USDA's policy to promote land use objectives responsive to current and long-term economic, social, and environmental needs and discourage the unwarranted conversion of important land resources to other uses. In general, USDA supports and promotes compact community development by discouraging the unwarranted expansion of the peripheral boundaries of existing settlements.

Formally Classified Lands

Pursuant to 7 CFR Part 1970, *Environmental Policies and Procedures* §1970.554 defines Formally Classified Lands as properties that are administered either by Federal, State, or local agencies, or have been given special protection through formal legislative designation.

As described in Section 3, *Project Location*, the Project site is located within the southwest corner of APN 750-130-005, a 3.67-acre, CVWD-owned property. None of the parcels in the immediate vicinity of the Project site are formally classified lands (e.g., national parks or landmarks). The southern boundary of Joshua Tree National Park is located approximately 2 miles to the north. Consultation with the Native American tribes pursuant to the requirements of AB 52 is currently underway for the proposed Project. As described in Section 14.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, there are no tribal lands within the immediate vicinity of the Project site. Therefore, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to formally classified lands would occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Project.

14.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The County has extensive deposits of clay, limestone, iron, sand, and aggregates. Mineral extraction is an important component of the County's economy (County of Riverside 2015a). Classification of land within California takes place according to a priority list that was established by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) in 1982, or when the SMGB is petitioned to classify a specific area. The SMGB has also established Mineral Resources Zones (MRZ) to designate lands that contain mineral deposits. The State has also designated Aggregate Mineral Resource areas within the County. The Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area (which contains the Project site) prepared by the CDC Division of Mines and Geology delineates the area of the Project site as a known mineral site for sand and gravel deposits in the *Palm Springs Production-Consumption (P-C)* Region (California Division of Mines and Geology 1981). No oil or gas wells are located on the Project site or within the surrounding vicinity. The nearest oil or gas well is located at the Dillon Sand and Gravel Mine, approximately 3 miles to the southwest of the Project site (CDC 2016).

Would the Project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?

No Impact.

There are no mineral recovery sites on or near the Project site. Implementation of the proposed Project would not result in development within any delineated mineral deposits. Additionally, the proposed Project would not include any mineral harvesting/extraction activities. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The County's General Plan recognizes areas near the Project site as containing State-designated significant mineral sectors and known or inferred significant MRZs (County of Riverside 2015a). However, the Project site itself is not a known mineral resource recovery site. While the implementation of the proposed Project would result in an increase in impervious surface of approximately 3,574 sf, the proposed Project would not result in a substantial loss of availability of locally or regionally important mineral resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

14.13 NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) For a project located within a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Noise is defined as unwanted sound or, more specifically, as any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with communication, is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying (Federal Interagency Committee on Noise [FICON] 1992). Human response to noise can vary according to the type and characteristics of the noise source, the distance between the noise source and the receptor, the sensitivity of the receptor, and the time of day.

Potential noise levels are compared to local ambient noise standards, within the context of the existing ambient noise setting. The term "ambient noise" refers to the composite of noise from all perceptible sources. It constitutes the existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

The Project site and the surrounding vicinity is generally characterized by undeveloped open space; the nearest rural residence is located approximately 0.5 miles from the Project site along 30th Avenue. The primary source of noise within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills is traffic along Dillon Road and other surrounding local roadways. According to FICON, based on the land use type, relative size, and population density, these communities are assumed to experience ambient noise levels up to 55 day-night average sound level (DNL) (FICON 1992).

The Noise Element of the County's General Plan (County of Riverside 2015a) provides a systematic approach to identifying and appraising noise problems in the community; quantifying existing and projected noise levels; addressing excessive noise exposure; and community planning for the regulation of noise (see Table 9). The Noise Element includes policies, standards, criteria, programs, diagrams, a reference to action items, and maps related to protecting public health and welfare from noise. According to the Riverside County Noise Ordinance, acceptable noise levels for the *Open Space-Rural (OS-RUR)* land use designation – identified in Rural Community in Table 10 – is 45 dBA L_{max}. However, sound emanating from facilities owned or operated by or for a government agency are exempt from the provisions of the noise ordinance.

A series of land uses have been deemed noise sensitive land uses by the State of California. These land uses require a serene environment as part of the overall facility or residential experience. Many of these facilities depend on low levels of sound to promote the wellbeing of the occupants. These uses include, but are not necessarily limited to, schools, hospitals, rest homes, long-term care facilities, mental care facilities, residential uses, places of worship, libraries, and passive recreation areas (County of Riverside 2015a). No such land uses occur within a 0.25-mile radius of the proposed Project, as the nearest development to the Project site are the rural residences located along 30th Avenue, approximately 0.5 miles from the Project site. The nearest schools, hospitals, rest homes, care facilities, places of worship, libraries, and formal passive recreation areas are located outside of Indio Hills in neighboring cities (e.g., Palm Desert, Indio, Coachella), more than 3 miles from the Project site.

Table 9. County of Riverside Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure

Land Use Category	Range of "Normally Acceptable" Community Noise Exposure (dBA)
Residential-low density single family, duplex, mobile homes	55-60
Residential-multiple family	55-65
Transient lodging-motels, hotels	55-70
Schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes	55-70
Playgrounds, neighborhood parks	55-75
Golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, cemeteries	55-75
Office buildings, businesses, commercial, and professional	55-70
Industrial, manufacturing, utilities, agriculture	55-75

Source**:** County of Riverside 2015.

Table 10. County of Riverside Sound Level Standards

General Plan Element	General Plan Land Use Designation	Maximum Decibel Level (dBA L_{max})	
		7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.
Community Development	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	55	45
	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	55	45
Rural Community	Low Density Residential (LDR)	55	45
Agriculture	Agriculture (AG)	45	45

Source**:** Riverside County Ordinance No. 847.

Groundborne vibration can be described by both *amplitude* and *frequency*. *Amplitude* may be characterized by particle velocity, which is measured in inches or millimeters per second. Construction vibrations consists of a composite or "spectrum" of many frequencies and are generally classified as broadband or random vibrations. The normal frequency range of most ground-borne vibration that can be felt by humans generally starts from a low frequency of less than 1 Hertz (Hz) to a high of about 200 Hz. Vibration can be felt outdoors, but the perceived intensity of vibration impacts is much greater indoors, due to the shaking of the structure. Common sources of vibration associated with construction come from ground-disturbing equipment, and large vehicles. Several land uses are especially sensitive to vibration, and therefore have a lower vibration threshold. These uses include, but are not limited to, concert halls, hospitals, libraries, vibration-sensitive research operations, residential areas, schools, and offices (County of Riverside 2015a).

Would the Project:

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less Than Significant Impact.

As previously described, sound emanating from facilities owned or operated by or for a governmental agency are exempt from the provisions of the noise ordinance. Although exempt from the Riverside County Noise Ordinance, CVWD routinely limits construction activities to the hours between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Two types of temporary construction-related noise impacts would occur during construction activities associated with the proposed Project: 1) on-site noise from heavy construction equipment used for demolition, excavation, etc.; and 2) off-site noise from heavy haul truck trips

and construction worker commutes. Heavy construction equipment required for the proposed construction and demolition activities is described in Table 11.

Construction activities would generate less than 10 trips to the Project site per day over the 18-month duration of construction activities. Noise sensitive land uses (i.e., residences) located along haul routes would be subject to truck noise during construction. Materials delivery and other heavy construction equipment supporting the construction activities would access the Project site via Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, and Sunny Rock Road, along the edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills and thereby avoiding rural residences to the maximum extent feasible. Noise levels associated with heavy haul trucks are commonly 81 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from the centerline of a roadway (Hendriks 1985). Although heavy haul truck trips are expected to result in brief intermittent noise increases on local roads in the vicinity, they would not measurably affect short- or long-term ambient noise levels.

To determine noise levels associated with temporary, short-term construction activities (e.g., excavation, grading, soil compaction, construction and demolition) and corresponding noise levels that would be experienced at the nearest sensitive receptor(s), it is general industry practice to combine the two loudest pieces of equipment that would be operating simultaneously during a specific construction phase and then calculate the attenuation of the construction noise level based on the distance to the nearest noise-sensitive receptor(s) (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2006). The Project site and the surrounding vicinity is characterized by undeveloped open space. The nearest noise-sensitive receptors are rural residences located along 30th Avenue, approximately 0.5 miles from the Project site. As shown in Table 11, maximum noise levels of the loudest construction equipment (i.e., grader, dozer, crane, excavator, concrete mixer) at 50-feet during construction would reach up to 85 dBA. Combining two of these noise levels at accounting for distance from the nearest noise sensitive land uses, the calculated maximum noise level experienced by sensitive land uses would reach up to 54 dBA.

Table 11. Noise Ranges of Typical Construction Equipment

Construction Equipment	Noise Levels at 50 feet (dBA L_{eq})	Noise Levels at 0.5 miles (dBA L_{eq})
Crane	81–85	47-51
Dozer	82-85	48-51
Front-end Loader	79-80	45-46
Flatbed Truck	74–84	40-50
Dump Truck	76-84	42-50
Grader	85	51
Tractor	84	50
Excavator	81-85	47-51
Concrete Mixers	79–85	45-51
Back Hoe	78–80	44-46
Water Tank	85	51

Note: Machinery equipped with noise control devices or other noise-reducing design features does not generate the same level of noise emissions as that shown in this table.
Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2017.

Operation of the proposed 1MG welded-steel tanks, including routine inspection and maintenance activities, would result in operational noise levels similar to those associated with the existing bolted-steel tanks. These noise level would not exceed, or even approach, exterior noise standards established in Tables 9 and 10. As such, short-term and temporary construction noise impacts as well as long-term operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would involve intermittent use of heavy construction equipment during construction activities (e.g., exaction of the two 60-foot diameter by 5-foot deep welded-steel reservoir foundations), which have potential to cause groundborne vibration. Vibration levels become perceptible to humans at 65 vibration decibels (VdB) and typically trigger human annoyance at 72 VdB or greater (FTA 2006). This threshold usually occurs when vibratory equipment is used roughly 55 feet from sensitive receptors.

The Project site is located approximately 0.5 miles from the nearest sensitive receptors along Dillon Road. As such, construction activities associated with the proposed Project would not create a substantial adverse impact related to groundborne vibration. Additionally, as with the existing bolted-steel tanks, the operation of the proposed welded-steel tanks would not generate groundborne vibration. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact.

c) For a project located within a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact.

The Project site is not located within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. The nearest public airport to the Project site is Palm Springs International Airport approximately 17 miles to the west. The Project site is not located in the Palm Spring International Airport influence area (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission 2004). Bermuda Dunes Airport is located approximately 7 miles south of the Project site. Neither Palm Springs International Airport nor Bermuda Dunes Airport contribute significantly to the noise environment of the Project site or surrounding vicinity. The proposed Project would not expose residents or workers in the area to excessive noise levels related to a private airstrip or airport. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact with respect to noise exposure on workers.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

Under the Noise Control Act of 1972, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration established workplace standards for noise. The minimum requirement states that constant noise exposure must not exceed 90 dBA over an 8-hour period. The highest allowable sound level to which workers can be constantly exposed is 115 dBA and exposure to this level must not exceed 15 minutes within an 8-hour period. The standards limit instantaneous exposure, such as impact

noise, to 140 dBA. If noise levels exceed these standards, employers are required to provide hearing protection equipment that will reduce sound levels to acceptable limits.

Land use compatibility with differing noise levels is regulated at the local level, although the federal government has established suggested land use compatibility criteria for different noise zones (Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise [FICUN] 1980). Based on the FICUN Land Use Guidelines, residential areas and schools are considered compatible up to 65 dBA DNL; outdoor recreational activities such as fishing and golfing are compatible with noise levels up to 70 dBA DNL; and parks are compatible with noise levels up to 75 dBA DNL (FICUN 1980).

As described in RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*, an evaluation of noise impacts may be required for the construction and operation of facilities, especially those facilities that may be located in or near noise sensitive developments such as residential areas. As described in Section 14.13(a), the Project site and the surrounding vicinity is characterized by undeveloped open space. The nearest noise-sensitive receptors are rural residences located along 30th Avenue, approximately 0.5 miles from the Project site. As shown in Table 11, maximum noise levels of the loudest construction equipment (i.e., grader, dozer, crane, excavator, concrete mixer) at 50-feet during construction would reach up to 85 dBA. Combining two of these noise levels at accounting for distance from the nearest noise sensitive land uses, the calculated maximum noise level experienced by sensitive land uses would reach up to 54 dBA. Operation of the proposed 1MG welded-steel tanks, including routine inspection and maintenance activities, would result in operational noise levels similar to those associated with the existing bolted-steel tanks. These noise level would not exceed, or even approach, exterior noise standards established in Tables 9 and 10. As such, short-term and temporary construction noise impacts as well as long-term operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

14.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned 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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Project site is located in unincorporated community of Indio Hills, which is sparely developed with residential and commercial land uses and a population of approximately 972 people (U.S. Census 2010).

Would the Project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact.

The proposed Project is limited to the replacement of two existing 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks with 1MG welded-steel tanks. The construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would improve water storage and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone. The proposed Project would not establish new housing or extend any roads or urban services. Additionally, the proposed Project would be intended to support existing development and would not facilitate the production of addition potable water resources within the Coachella Valley, which are determined by groundwater inputs and not aboveground storage. Construction employment opportunities provided by the proposed Project would not result in long-term relocation by workers due the temporary nature of the proposed construction activities and availability of labor in the local construction sector. The proposed Project would neither affect population or housing within unincorporated community of Indio Hills nor in the greater regional vicinity (e.g., Coachella Valley). Therefore, there would be no population growth impacts as a result of the proposed Project.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact.

Refer to Section 14.14(a). The proposed Project is limited to the replacement of two existing 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks with 1MG welded steel tanks. Implementation of the proposed Project would not displace any housing within the Project site; therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* is designed to focus Federal attention on environmental and human health conditions in minority and low-income communities. This EO is further intended to promote non-discrimination in Federal programs substantially affecting human health and environment and to provide for information access and public participation relating to such matters. Under EO 12898, Federal agencies must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of Federal programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Specifically, the EO calls for the development of agency-specific strategies; improving research, data collection, and analysis; identifying differential patterns of natural resource consumption; and ensuring effective public participation and access to information. The Council on Environmental Quality published Environmental Justice Guidance under the NEPA (CEQ 1997) to assist in assessing environmental justice issues. As part of the directives that accompanied the EO, Federal agencies must promote enforcement of all health

and environmental strategies in areas where minority and low-income populations reside. The Environmental Justice Guidance under NEPA (CEQ 1997) recommends identifying minority or low-income communities in the vicinity of a project site to determine whether they may be disproportionately or adversely affected; identifying any potential for multiple or cumulative exposure to human health or environmental hazards; recognizing interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical, or economic factors that may amplify environmental effects; and developing effective public participation strategies, including overcoming any linguistic barriers and seeking tribal representation as appropriate.

CEQ (1997) indicates that *"[m]inority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected areas is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis."* CEQ (1997) also indicates that low income populations should be identified using poverty thresholds published annually by the Census Bureau, and adds that *"[i]n identifying low-income populations, agencies may consider as a community either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions of environmental exposure or effect."* For example, in 2009, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was $21,756 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010c). The Decennial Census provides information on the percentage of residents in a given geographic area who live in households with income below the poverty level.

As previously described the unincorporated community of Indio Hills has a population of 972 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Between 2016 and 2017 the population declined from 1,119 to 972, an approximately 13-percent decrease (Data USA 2020). Approximately 68 percent of the population within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills is Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Median household income in Indio Hills is $37,353 and 21 percent of persons live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

The proposed Project would not result in disproportionate adverse socioeconomic or environmental justice impacts to a minority population or low-income population. The Project site is generally surrounded by undeveloped open space. The nearest rural residences are located 0.5 miles to the south along 30th Avenue. As described in Section 14.3, *Air Quality*, Section 14.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, and Section 14.13, *Noise*, these rural residences would not be affected by indirect, off-site impacts associated with the proposed Project. As described in Section 14.17, *Transportation*, construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would temporarily increase vehicle trips along the surrounding roadway network (e.g., Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, Sunny Rock Road), but would not result in a noticeable increase in congestion. Therefore, the proposed construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would not disproportionality affect low-income or minority populations.

The proposed Project would be limited to the replacement of two existing 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks with two 1MG welded-steel tanks. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in any adverse operational impacts. The construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would improve water storage and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone /

Indio Hills Pressure Zone. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in substantial direct long-term beneficial impacts to all segments of the local population.

14.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:				
(i) Fire Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(ii) Police Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iii) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iv) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(v) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the Project:

The Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) provides fire protection and emergency medical (i.e., paramedic) services to unincorporated areas of Riverside County. Sky Valley Fire Station (No. 56), which is located approximately 11 miles northwest of the Project site in Desert Hot Springs, is the closest station to the Project site. Law enforcement services are provided to the unincorporated areas of Riverside County by the Riverside County Sherriff's Department. Riverside County Sheriff's Department is staffed with over 3,600 individuals (Riverside County Sherriff's Department 2020). The Riverside County Sheriff's Thermal Station is located at 86625 Airport Boulevard approximately 14 miles to the south of the Project site. As previously described, no public schools are located within the unincorporated area of Indio Hills. The nearest schools are Desert Ridge Academy Middle School and Shadow Hills High School in Indio and Xavier Preparatory High School located in Palm Desert, approximately 10 miles southwest of the Project site. There are no neighborhood parks located within the vicinity of the Project site. The Coachella Valley Preserve is located approximately 6 miles to the northwest of the Project site and provides recreational hiking and walking trails.

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

i) Fire protection?

No Impact.

As described in Section 14.17, *Transportation*, the construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would generate heavy haul truck trips and construction worker commutes; however, these vehicle trips would not result in a noticeable increase in congestion or otherwise interfere with emergency response times. During construction, emergency access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity would be maintained as no lane closures or detours would be required along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road. The proposed Project would not involve long-term changes in existing land use or activities at the Project site and would not induce population growth or substantially increase, either directly or indirectly, the need for fire protection services. The proposed Project would restore and improve water storage infrastructure and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone serving the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would result in a beneficial effect on fire protection services.

ii) Police protection?

No Impact.

As described in Section 14.17, *Transportation*, the construction and demolition activities associated with the proposed Project would generate heavy haul truck trips and construction worker commutes; however, these vehicle trips would not result in a noticeable increase in congestion or otherwise interfere with emergency response times. During construction, emergency access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity would be maintained as no lane closures or detours would be required along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road. The proposed Project would not involve long-term changes in existing land use or activities at the Project site and would not induce population growth or substantially increase, either directly or indirectly, the need for police services. Operation of the proposed Project would not generate and increased demand for law enforcement and no new facilities (e.g., police stations) would be required. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact on police protection.

iii) Schools?

No Impact.

No new residential units would be constructed as a part of the proposed Project, and the proposed Project would not result in new permanent populations that would require school facilities. As such, the proposed Project would not increase demand on local schools. No impact would occur.

iv) Parks?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would not include development of any new residential units and would not generate any new permanent residents that would increase the demand on local

parks. No parks are located in the vicinity of the Project site. Implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact on parks.

v) Other public facilities?

No Impact.

The proposed Project does not include development of new residential units and would not generate any new permanent residents that would increase demand on other public services or facilities. As such, no impact to other public facilities would occur from implementation of the proposed Project.

14.16 RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

According to Riverside County's Western Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016), the Project site and the surrounding vicinity includes rural, rural community, open space and community development designations. There are no neighborhood parks located within the Project site or the surrounding vicinity. A regional trail follows the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and along a portion of Avenue 66 to the west of the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. The Coachella Valley Preserve, located approximately 6 miles to the northwest of the Project site, provides recreational hiking and walking trails.

a) Would the project 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?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would replace two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. Neither construction nor operation of the proposed welded-steel tanks would increase demand on existing or planned recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact on parks and recreational facilities.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would not develop or require the construction of recreational facilities that would physically affect the environment. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would result in no impact.

14.17 TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Conflict with program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The transportation network in unincorporated Riverside County is overseen by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and Community Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP). The RCTC plans and implements transportation and transit improvements and assists local governments with funding for local streets and roads to promote accessible transportation throughout the County. RCTC's current Congestion Management Program (CMP; RCTC 2011) was adopted in December 2011 and incorporated into RCTC's 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP, takes a comprehensive review of projects on the State highway, regional arterials, rail and bus, freight network, and active transportation. According to the 2011 CMP, all roadway segments within the vicinity of the Project site were operating at acceptable levels of service (RCTC 2011).

Regional access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity is provided by I-10 and Dillon Road. Dillon Road runs in a northwest-southeast direction for approximately 33 miles, traversing unincorporated areas of Riverside County including Sky Valley, North Palm Springs, and Indio Hills as well as the City of Desert Hot Springs, ending at Twentynine Palm Highway (SR-62). Dillon Road is a 26-foot wide, two-lane road, with an 18-foot wide unpaved shoulder line by above ground utilities. Dillion Road has an uncontrolled intersection with Sunny Rock Road, located at the eastern edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. Sunny Rock Road is an approximately 17-foot wide paved roadway that extends for approximately 0.5 miles to the north where it ends at an unpaved and gated access road that provides direct access to the Project site.

Would the Project:

a) Conflict with program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would involve the excavation of approximately 4,840 cy, soil compaction, and construction of two 1MG welded steel tanks as well as all associated appurtenances and infrastructure. Following the completion of construction activities, the existing 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks would be demolished. Construction staging and equipment laydown would occur within the Project site approximately 0.5 miles north of Sunny Rock Road.

As described in Section 6, *Project Description*, the proposed Project would generate less than 10 trips per day – including soil export, materials delivery, demolition debris removal, and construction worker commutes. This minor increase in vehicle trips within the vicinity of the Project site would be temporary and would not have a significant impact related to long-term, regional circulation planning. Vehicle trips associated with routine inspection and maintenance of the proposed welded-steel tanks would be similar to those associated with the existing tanks. Therefore, the proposed Project would not cause substantial adverse impacts to the existing circulation system within the vicinity of the Project site and would have a less than significant impact.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 or will conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

Less than Significant Impact.

Pursuant to SB 743, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) provides criteria for analyzing transportation impacts associated with land use and transportation projects based on VMT as a metric for measuring traffic congestion. This section of the CEQA Guidelines summarizes qualitative analysis methods such as the availability of transit and proximity to other destinations; it also states that a qualitative analysis of construction traffic would potentially be appropriate for many projects. Lead agencies are required to utilize VMT by July 1, 2020.

According to a technical advisory on evaluating transportation impacts from the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), *"[a]bsent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day*[6] *generally may be assumed to cause a less than*

[6] *"CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, so long as the project is in an area where public infrastructure is available to allow for maximum planned development and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301[e][2]) Typical project types for which trip generation increases relatively linearly with building footprint (i.e., general office building, single tenant office building, office park, and business park) generate or attract an additional 110-124 trips per 10,000 square feet. Therefore, absent*

significant transportation impact" (OPR 2017). The proposed Project would generate less than 10 trips per day during construction of the proposed tanks. Therefore, construction of the proposed Project would generate fewer trips than the OPR's threshold of 110 trips per day and impacts related to VMT would be less than significant.

As previously described, operational vehicle trips associated with routine inspection and maintenance of the proposed tanks would be similar to those associated with the existing tanks. Therefore, operation of the tanks would not generate a measurable increase in trips or VMT.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact.

The proposed Project involves the replacement of two 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks with 1MG welded-steel tanks within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. The Project site is only accessible by a single dirt road that extends from Sunny Rock Road and is primarily used by personnel with authorized access to the Project site. The proposed Project would not change the design of existing traffic-related infrastructure or change existing traffic patterns. The proposed Project would not introduce any incompatible uses that might introduce a safety hazard to circulation. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact.

During construction, emergency access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity would be maintained as no lane closures or detours would be required along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road. Additionally, all heavy haul truck trips would be directed along 30th Avenue or Sunny Rock Road, along the edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills and thereby avoiding rural residences to the maximum extent feasible.

Construction worker vehicles would be parked on the Project site within previously disturbed and graded areas.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact.

As described in Section 14.17(c), emergency access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity would be maintained as no lane closures or detours would be required along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road. Additionally, all heavy haul truck trips would be directed along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road, along the edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills and thereby avoiding rural residences to the maximum extent feasible. The proposed Project would have no adverse operational impacts on the transportation network. The proposed

substantial evidence otherwise, it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of 110 or fewer trips could be considered not to lead to a significant impact" (OPR 2017).

Project would not involve changes to the existing street network and would not introduce any new or incompatible uses.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

As described in RUS Bulletin 1794-602, *Guide for Preparing the Environmental Report for Water and Environmental Program Proposals*, the impact of Federal actions on transportation facilities is required for the construction of highway crossings or elevated water storage facilities – particularly when these facilities are located adjacent to airports (including airport clearance or accident zones), roads, highways, railroads, and navigable waterways. However, implementation. However, as described in Section 14.17(c), the proposed Project involves the replacement of two 100,000-gallon bolted-steel tanks with 1MG welded-steel tanks within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. The Project site is only accessible by a single dirt road that extends from Sunny Rock Road and is primarily used by personnel with authorized access to the Project site. The proposed Project would not change the design of existing traffic-related infrastructure or change existing traffic patterns. Additionally, as described in Section 14.13(c), the Project site is not located within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport.

14.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k); or	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52, 2014) established a consultation process with a Leady Agency and California Native American tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) list. AB 52 requires consideration of Tribal Cultural Values in the determination of Project impacts and mitigation. AB 52 establishes a new class of resources, *tribal cultural resources*, defined as a site feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place or object, which is of cultural value to a Tribe that

is either: 1) on or eligible for the CRHR or a local historic register; or 2) treated by the lead agency, at its discretion, as a traditional cultural resource per Public Resources Code Section 21074(a)(1)(A)-(B).

As described in Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources*, a Cultural Resources Assessment was prepared for the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project (CVWD 2015b; see Appendix D). This report was reviewed and is summarized within this IS/MND given the proximity of the pipeline project to this project, which is within approximately 0.25 miles. As part of the 2021 cultural resources review, Wood consultants prepared a *Cultural Resources Assessment Letter Report* (July 2021) to access the project site and satisfy USDA's NEPA requirements. In addition, in 2021, CVWD conducted site-specific AB52 consultation (summarized below).

AB 52 requires lead agencies to consult with California Native American tribes that request such consultation in writing prior to the agency's release of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR or notice of an MND or Negative Declaration (ND). CVWD distributed letters to the Native American tribes that have previously requested notification of the opportunity for consultation pursuant to AB 52.

On April 22, 2021, CVWD initiated AB 52 consultation via certified letter (see Appendix X). Which invited participation and consultation regarding any concerns related to Tribal Cultural Resources pursuant to AB 52 and Public Resources Code (PRC) §21080.3.1, *Formal Notification of Decision to Undertake a Project*, *and Notification of Consultation Opportunity*.

One Native American Tribe has expressed interest this project. In May 2021, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) provided a comment letter stating that the Project site located within the Tribe's Traditional Use Area and requested: formal government-to-government consultation under AB 52; a cultural resources inventory of the Project site by a qualified archaeologist, prior to any development activities in this area; a copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the EIC; and copies of any cultural resource documentation (e.g., reports and site records) generated in connection with this proposed Project (see Appendix E). CVWD's environment staff have discussed the project with the ACBCI via telephone in May and June 2021, provided copy of the requested project material, and consultation has concluded.

Would the Project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)? Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

and

ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

As previously described, the records searches conducted as a part of the original Cultural Resources Assessment (CVWD 2015b) and the Project-specific Cultural Resources Assessment (Wood 2021b) did not identify any historic sites or archaeological resources associated with or potentially possessing cultural value to a Native American tribe. Nevertheless, the absence of known historic sites, archaeological resources, or tribal cultural resources does not eliminate the potential to encounter such resources during ground-disturbing activities associated with the proposed Project.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 Worker Environmental Awareness Program Training; CR-2 Inadvertent Discovery of Archaeological Resources; CR-3 Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains: Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e), and TCR-1 would reduce potential impacts to unknown tribal cultural resources to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure TCR-1 Native American Monitoring: CVWD shall provide a Native American monitoring during earth work activities, including site clearing and excavation. If previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources are discovered during construction, CVWD shall ensure that all work in the vicinity of the find is redirected until all appropriate recovery and recordation has occurred.

14.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project:				
a) Require or result in the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electrical power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Water Supply

CVWD delivers irrigation and potable water, collects and recycles wastewater, provides regional storm water protection, and replenishes the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin and is the largest water supplier in the Coachella Valley. CVWD's water supplies come from groundwater, recycled water, imported water from the State Water Project (via the CRA) and the Colorado River via the Coachella Canal, a branch of the All-American Canal. All potable water is pumped from the groundwater basin. Imported and recycled water supplies are used to meet non-urban water demands and for groundwater replenishment. All drinking or domestic water provided by CVWD is sourced from the groundwater basin. Wells approximately 1,200 feet deep reach the highest quality water within the aquifer (CVWD 2020a). Water is extracted through pumping into 63 distribution reservoirs (CVWD 2020a). Water is then delivered to customers via 2,015 miles of distribution piping (CVWD 2020a).

Wastewater

CVWD provides wastewater collection and treatment services in the vicinity of the Project site. Nearly 6.3 billion gallons of wastewater are treated yearly (CVWD 2020b). CVWD's wastewater collection system consists of more than 1,100 miles of sewer pipelines and includes more than 30 sewage lift stations that collect and transport wastewater to the nearest water reclamation facility (CVWD 2020b). CVWD operates six water reclamation plants (WRPs), three of which are equipped to treat wastewater to meet State standards for non-potable water for irrigation.

Stormwater

CVWD provides regional flood protection for its stormwater unit within the Coachella Valley. Within CVWD's boundaries there are 16 stormwater protection channels. The entire system includes approximately 135 miles of channels built along the natural alignment of dry creeks that naturally flow from the surrounding mountains into the Whitewater River (CVWD 2020c). The backbone of the stormwater protection system is a 50-mile storm channel that runs from the Whitewater River north of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. The entire length of this flood protection facility is known as the Whitewater River / Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.

Solid Waste

Riverside County Department of Waste Resources provides trash, recycling, composting and other waste resources to the unincorporated areas of Riverside County. Riverside County operates seven landfills. The nearest landfill, however, is privately operated by Coachella / Indio

Waste Transfer Station (TS) Authority and is located approximately 9 miles to the southeast of the Project site.

Utilities

As described in Section 14.6, *Energy*, IID provides electricity services and Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas services within the vicinity of the Project site.

Would the Project:

a) Require or result in the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electrical power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less Than Significant Impact.

The proposed Project would result in the replacement of two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. As previously described, construction of the proposed Project would not result in significant physical impacts to the environment. While the two proposed water reservoirs would be larger than the existing reservoirs and would therefore increase impervious surface area at the Project site. However, runoff generated during storm events would not be significantly different from current conditions and would not require any changes to existing stormwater infrastructure. Further, the proposed Project would not increase demand for wastewater treatment at an off-site facility. The proposed Project would not increase demand for water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electrical power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, such that additional facilities may be required in the future. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Short-term water demand for construction-related activities (e.g., dust suppression) would be similar to typical construction projects and would not result in excessive strain on existing supplies. The proposed Project would replace two 100,000-gallon water reservoirs with two 1MG gallon water reservoirs, resulting a tenfold increase in storage capacity. These improvements would ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone. Operationally, the proposed Project would not include new development that would increase long-term water demand or water use at the Project site (e.g., residential or commercial land uses). Therefore, the proposed Project would have a minor benefit to existing water supply infrastructure and impacts would be less than significant.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact.

The proposed Project does not include residential land uses or other development which would generate a substantial increase in wastewater. Therefore, the proposed facilities would not result in increased demand for stormwater or wastewater treatment, and there would be no impact.

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project would generate short-term construction and demolition debris. However, the total volume of solid wastes generated by the proposed Project would be minor and would be well within the existing capacity of landfills in the region. For example, Coachella Valley TS, the nearest landfill located approximately 9 miles southeast of the Project site, permits 100 tons of solid waste per day (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery 2019). Following the completion of the proposed construction and demolition activities, the proposed Project would not generate solid waste. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e) Comply with Federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Disposal of waste materials would comply with all Federal, State, and local requirements for integrated waste management and solid waste disposal. Therefore, impacts related to solid waste would be less than significant.

14.20 WILDFIRE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as a very high fire hazard severity zones, **Would the Project:**				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (e.g., roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Project site is located in a largely undeveloped area more than 0.5 miles from the nearest structure. The Project site is located outside of any Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). The nearest potential wildfire risk area is located approximately 10 miles to the west, where there is a State Responsibility Area (SRA) with a Very High FHSZ (VHFHSZ) (CAL FIRE 2020).

Would the Project:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact.

As described in Section 14.17, *Transportation*, emergency access to the Project site and the surrounding vicinity would be maintained as no lane closures or detours would be required along Dillon Road, 30th Avenue, or Sunny Rock Road. All heavy haul truck trips would be directed along the edge of the unincorporated community of Indio Hills, thereby avoiding rural residences to the maximum extent feasible. The proposed Project would not conflict with any emergency response plan and would not induce in congestion that could substantially increase emergency response times or reduce emergency vehicle access within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact.

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact.

The proposed Project would result in the replacement of two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. No new habitable structures are proposed as a part of the proposed Project; therefore, no new people would be exposed to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. The proposed welded-steel tanks would not be located in a FHSZ. The Project site and surrounding area is flat and not located near slopes or other factors that would exacerbate wildfire risk. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact with respect to the potential uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (e.g., roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No Impact.

Infrastructure associated with the proposed welded-steel tanks would be limited to buried water lines, a riprap revetment, and chain-link perimeter fencing. No other roads, powerlines, or other utilities would be required. Therefore, the proposed Project would not exacerbate fire risk and no impact would occur.

d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact.

As previously described, the Project site and surrounding area is relatively flat and is not located in close proximity to slopes that could pose potential flooding or landslide hazards following runoff, post-fire slope instability or drainage changes. The proposed Project would replace two existing bolted-steel tanks with larger welded-steel tanks. No development of habitable structures or other operational use is considered as a part of the proposed Project. Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope the instability, or drainage changes and no impact to post-fire slope instability or drainage changes would occur.

14.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 wild-life population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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 decrease 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, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

As described in Section 14.4, *Biological Resources* and Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources* impacts on biological resources and cultural resources could be potentially significant; however, with the incorporation of all required mitigation measures – including Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 as well as Mitigation Measure CR-1 through CR-3 – these potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, the proposed Project would not substantially 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 wildlife community; or reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species. In addition, the proposed Project would not eliminate important examples of California history or pre-history.

b) Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

As discussed and analyzed in this Initial Study, the proposed Project would result in no impacts or less than significant impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, geology and soils, GHG emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems.

With the implementation of BMPs described in Section 14.3, *Air Quality* as well as the mitigation measures described in Section 14.4, *Biological Resources*, Section 14.5, *Cultural Resources*, Section 14.7, *Geology and Soils*, and Section 14.18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed Project would be less than significant. Since these impacts associated with the proposed Project would not be significant when compared to applicable thresholds, none of the impacts associated with the proposed Project would make cumulatively considerable, incremental contributions to significant cumulative impacts.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will have substantial adverse effects on human beings, directly or indirectly?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction of the proposed Project would generate noise and produce air emissions. However, as described in Section 14.3, *Air Quality* and Section 14.13, *Noise*, the impacts to construction workers and surrounding residents would be less than significant. The proposed Project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Supplemental NEPA Analysis

Controversy

The proposed Project an infrastructure improvement project that would improve water storage and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone. The proposed Project is not known to be the subject of controversy for any environmental or other reason. It is

Extraordinary Circumstances

There are no known extraordinary circumstances that would cause the proposed Project to have a significant environmental effect.

PREPARATION

This Initial Study was prepared by the Coachella Valley Water District with assistance by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

Coachella Valley Water District:

William Patterson, Environmental Specialist

Brett Daniels, Biologist (retired)

Elizabeth Meyerhoff, Environmental Specialist (retired)

Steve Bigley, Director of Environmental Services

Amer Hassouneh, Engineer

Dan Ruiz, Engineering Manager

Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.:

Aaron Goldschmidt, Program Manager
M.A. Geography

Nick Meisinger, Project Manager
B.S. Environmental Science

Kari Gannon, PE, Civil Engineer
B.S. Civil Engineering

Nick Ricono, Wetland and Permitting Specialist
M.S. Biology

Kari Morehouse, Biologist
M.S. Biology

Sydnie Margallo, Air Quality Specialist
B.A. Environmental Management and Protection

Ashlyn Navarro, Environmental Analyst
B.A. Environmental Studies

Deirdre Stites, Graphics

REFERENCES

Alles, D.L. 2011. “Geology of the Salton Trough.” October 28.

California Air Resource Board (CARB). 2019. “California Ambient Air Quality Standards.” Available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/california-ambient-air-quality-standards.

California Department of Conservation (CDC). 2016. “Mines Online.” Available at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/index.html.

CDC Division of Land Resource Protection. 2017. “Riverside County Important Farmland.” Available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2016/.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2012. “Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation.” State of California Natural Resources Agency Department of Fish and Game.

CDFW. 2020. “California Natural Diversity Database.” Available at: https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Plants-and-Animals.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2020. “Fire Hazard Severity Zones Maps.” State of California, Office of the State Fire Marshall. Available at: https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/wildfire-planning-engineering/wildland-hazards-building-codes/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps/.

California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. 2019. “SWIS Facility Detail.” Available at: https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory/33-AA-0248/.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2019. “Officially Designated County Scenic Highways.” Available at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways.

California Department of Water Resources (DWR). 1964. Coachella Valley Investigation Bulletin 108.

California Division of Mines and Geology. 1981. “Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area.”

California Geological Survey. 2016. “Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Mapper.” https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/.

California Geological Survey. 2018. “DOC Maps: Geologic Hazards.” Available at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/geologichazards/#webmaps.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS). 2020. “Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California.” California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Program. Available at: http://www.rareplants.cnps.org/index.html.

Coachella Valley Association of Government (CVAG). 2016. “Final Major Amendment to the CVMSHCP.” Available at:

http://ftp.cvag.org/Plan%20Documents/11.%20CVAG%20MSHCP%20Plan%20Section%204.0.pdf.

CVAG. 2019. “Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.” Available at: http://www.cvmshcp.org/.

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). 2015a. “Biological Survey Report for Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project.”

CVWD. 2015b. “Cultural Resource Assessment of the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase II Project, Riverside County, California.”

CVWD. 2016. “2015 Urban Water Management Plan.”

CVWD. 2020a. “Where Does My Water Come From?” Available at: https://www.cvwd.org/154/Where-does-my-water-come-from.

CVWD. 2020b. “Wastewater Treatment.” Available at: https://www.cvwd.org/163/Wastewater-Treatment.

CVWD. 2020c. “Stormwater Protection and Flood Control.” Available at: https://www.cvwd.org/165/Stormwater-Protection-Flood-Control.

Council on Environmental Quality (1997). Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act.

County of Riverside. 2002. “Riverside County General Plan Program EIR. Section 4.9 Cultural and Paleontological Resources/” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_plan_2015/DEIR%20521/04-09_CulturalAndPaleoResrcs.pdf.

County of Riverside. 2015a. “Riverside County General Plan – December 2015.” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan/Riverside-County-General-Plan-2015.

County of Riverside. 2015b. “Multipurpose Open Space Element.” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_plan_2016/elements/Ch05_MOSE_120815.pdf?ver=2016-04-01-100801-367.

County of Riverside. 2019a. “Land Use Element.” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/elements/Ch03_Land%20Use_041619.pdf.

County of Riverside. 2019b. “Western Coachella Valley Area Plan.” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/ap/WCVAP_121019.pdf.

County of Riverside. 2019c. “Zoning.” Available at: https://gisopendata-countyofriverside.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/zoning?geometry=-116.236%2C33.832%2C-116.182%2C33.844.

County of Riverside. 2019d. “Safety Element.” Available at: https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/elements/Ch06_Safety_080619.pdf.

Data USA. 2020. “Indio Hills, CA.” Available at: https://datausa.io/profile/geo/indio-hills-ca/.

Deméré, T.A. 2002. “Silent Beaches: Ancient Lake Cahuila and its Geologic Setting.” Available at: http://archive.sdnhm.org/research/paleontology/lakecahuilla.html.

Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2020. “EnviroStor Database.” Available at: https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=Sacramento&tour=True.http.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2021. “FEMA Flood Map Service Center.” 2020. https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=indio%20hills%20california#searchresultsanchor.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2017. “Construction Noise Handbook.” Available at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/construction_noise/handbook/

Federal Interagency Committee on Noise (FICON). 1992. “Federal Agency Review of Selected Airport Noise Analysis Issues.”

Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (FICUN). 1980. “Guidelines for Considering Noise in Land Use Planning and Control.”

Hendriks, R.W. 1985. “California Vehicle Noise Emission.” Available at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/trr/1985/1033/1033-010.pdf.

Imperial Irrigation District. 2020. “Energy Services Maps.” Available at: https://www.iid.com/energy/about-iid-energy/energy-service-maps.

National Audubon Society. 2020. “Important Bird Areas.” Available at: https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas.

Office of Planning and Research (OPR). 2017. “Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA.” Available at: http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20171127_Transportation_Analysis_TA_Nov_2017.pdf.

Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission. 2004. “Riverside County ALUCP—West County Airports Background Data.”

Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. 2020. “Building in a Floodplain.” Available at: https://rcflood.org/Residents/Building-in-a-Floodplain

Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. 2020. “About us.” Available at: https://www.riversidesheriff.org/251/Crime.

Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC). 2011 “2011 Riverside County Congestion Management Program.” Available at: https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/28233722/congestion-management-program-riverside-county-.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). 2009. Available at: file:///Z:/CVWD%20IS%20Resevoirs%204711-3%20and%20-4/Background/Citations/LSTs%20appendix-c-mass-rate-lst-look-up-tables.pdf.

SCAQMD. 2017. “Final 2016 Air Quality Management Plan.” Available at: http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/clean-air-plans/air-quality-management-plans/2016-air-quality-management-plan/final-2016-aqmp/final2016aqmp.pdf?sfvrsn=15.

SCAQMD. 2019. “South Coast AQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds.” Available at: http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf.

SCAQMD. 2020. “Jurisdiction.” Available at: http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/jurisdiction#Riverside.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. “Indio Hills Census Designated Place, California.” Available at: https://archive.vn/20140715025734/http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=06:0636452.

U.S. Census Bureau. “2019. Indio Hills Census Designated Place, California.” Available at: https://www.census.gov/search-results.html?searchType=web&cssp=SERP&q=Indio%20Hills%20CDP,%20CA#.

U.S. Department of Federal Transit Administration (FTA). 2006. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. Available at: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Noise_and_Vibration_Manual.pdf.

U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). 198–. Manual 8400 - Visual Resource Management. April.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2011. “Category 5 2010 California 303(d) List Of Water Quality Limited Segments.” Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/2010state_ir_reports/category5_report.shtml.

USEPA. 2020. “California Nonattainment/Maintenance Status for Each County by Year for All Criteria Pollutants.” Available at: https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/anayo_ca.html.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2020. “Web Soil Survey.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Available at: https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). 2019. “U.S. Quaternary Faults Map.” Available at: https://usgs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5a6038b3a1684561a9b0aadf88412fcf.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2010. “Preparing for any Action that may occur within the Range of the Mojave Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*i).”

USFWS. 2020a. “USFWS Threatened & Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report.” Available at: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html.

USFWS. 2020b. “Information for Planning an– Consultation - Coachella Valley Water District Proposed Reservoir 4711 Project.” Available at: https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/.

WEST Consulting, Inc. 2020. “Reservoirs 4711-3&4, Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis.” Memorandum from WEST Consultants, Inc. Coachella Valley Water District.

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). 2020. “Map of Sites.” Available at: https://whsrn.org/whsrn-sites/map-of-sites/.

Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood). 2020. “CalEEMod version 2016.3.2 for the Proposed Construction of Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 in Indio Hill, Riverside County.”

Wood. 2021a. “Biological Survey Report for the Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 Project, Indio Hills, Riverside County, California.”

Wood. 2021b. “Cultural Survey Report for the Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 Project, Indio Hills, Riverside County, California.”

Wood. 2021c. “Floodplain Analysis Memorandum for the Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 Project, Indio Hills, Riverside County, California.”

ACRONYMS

$\mu g/m^3$	micrograms per cubic meter
AB	Assembly Bill
AC	asbestos cement
ACBCI	Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
AF	acre-feet
APE	Area of Potential Effect
APN	Assessor Parcel Number
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ARD	Aquatic Resources Delineation
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BMP	best management practices
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDC	California Department of Conservation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CETAP	Community Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	cubic feet per second
CH_4	methane
CMP	Congestion Management Program
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CRA	Colorado River Aqueduct
CRHR	California Register of Historical Places
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments
CVCC	Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
CVWD	Coachella Valley Water District
CWA	Clean Water Act
cy	cubic yard
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DNL	day-night average sound level
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIC	Eastern Information Center
ER	Environmental Report
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone

FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FICON	Federal Interagency Committee on Noise
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Maps
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas emissions
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GWP	global warming potential
H_2S	hydrogen sulfide
HDPE	high-density polyethylene
HFC	hydrofluorocarbons
I-	Interstate
IID	Imperial Irrigation District
IS	Initial Study
L_{eq}	noise equivalent level
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
LSAA	Lake and Streambed Alternation Agreement
LSTs	Localized Significance Thresholds
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
Mph	miles per hour
MRZ	Mineral Resources Zones
MSL	mean sea level
MT CO_2e/yr	million tons of CO_2e per year
MWD	Metropolitan Water District
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Place
O_3	ozone
OHWM	ordinary high water mark
OPR	Office of Planning and Research
OS-C	Open Space Conservation
OS-RUR	Open Space-Rural
PA	Programmatic Agreement
Pb	lead
P-C	Production-Consumption
PFC	perfluorocarbons
PM	particulate matter
ppm	parts per million
RCFC	Riverside County Fire Department
RCTC	Riverside County Transportation Commission
RUS	Rural Utilities Service

RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
sf	Square foot
SF6	sulfur hexafluoride
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Areas
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SMGB	State Mining and Geology Board
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SR-	State Route
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SRAs	source receptor areas
SSAB	Salton Sea Air Basin
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TACs	toxic air contaminants
TMDL	total maximum daily loads
TS	Transfer Station
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USPS	U.S. Postal Service
VdB	vibration decibels
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WEAP	Worker Environmental Awareness Program
WHSRN	Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network
WRP	water reclamation plants