



INYO COUNTY CLERK  
CEQA FILING COVER SHEET

THIS SPACE FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Complete and attach this form to each CEQA Notice filed with the County Clerk

**TYPE OF PRINT CLEARLY**

**Project Title**

Owens Lake Tillage with Best Available Control Measure Backup Habitat Enhancement

**Check Document being Filed:**

- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
- Notice of Exemption (NOE)
- Other (Please fill in type):

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT  
**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

Submission of this form is optional. The form shall be filed with the County Clerk pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21168(d), the filing of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on Court challenges to the approval of the project. Failure to file the notice results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

<b>TO:</b> Office of Planning and Research P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044	<b>TO:</b> Inyo County Clerk P.O. Drawer F Independence, CA 93526
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**FROM (LEAD AGENCY/APPLICANT AND ADDRESS):**  
 Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)  
 111 North Hope Street, Room 1044  
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

**PROJECT TITLE:**  
 Owens Lake Tillage with Best Available Control Measure Backup Habitat Enhancement

<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b> Owens Lake, south of Lone Pine and North of Cartago. Please see attached map.	<b>CITY:</b> Not applicable	<b>COUNTY:</b> Inyo
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**DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT:**  
 LADWP proposes to implement the Tillage with Best Available Control Measure Backup (TwB2) Habitat Enhancement to resolve issues impacting LADWP's ability to meet habitat maintenance commitments for Dust Control Areas (DCAs) T16 and T2-2 in Owens Lake. In recent years, the habitat value of these DCAs are below required levels for target wildlife guilds according to the Habitat Suitability Model (HSM) associated with Lake Alteration Agreement Notification No. 1600-2014-0155-R6. Therefore, LADWP proposes to grade T2-2 to improve the ability to fill to the ideal water depth described in the HSM, and to construct operational improvements in T16 to lower salinity levels (see enclosure). Minor improvements to existing roads are proposed to enable construction equipment access. An archaeologist and a tribal monitor will be present to monitor ground-disturbing activities.

<b>CONTACT PERSON:</b> Jane Hauptman	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b> (213) 367- 0968
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<b>EXEMPT STATUS:</b> Categorically exempt under Class 1	<b>SECTION:</b> 15301
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**JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:**  
 Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The habitat enhancement proposed is maintenance/minor alteration of existing topographical features with no expansion of use.

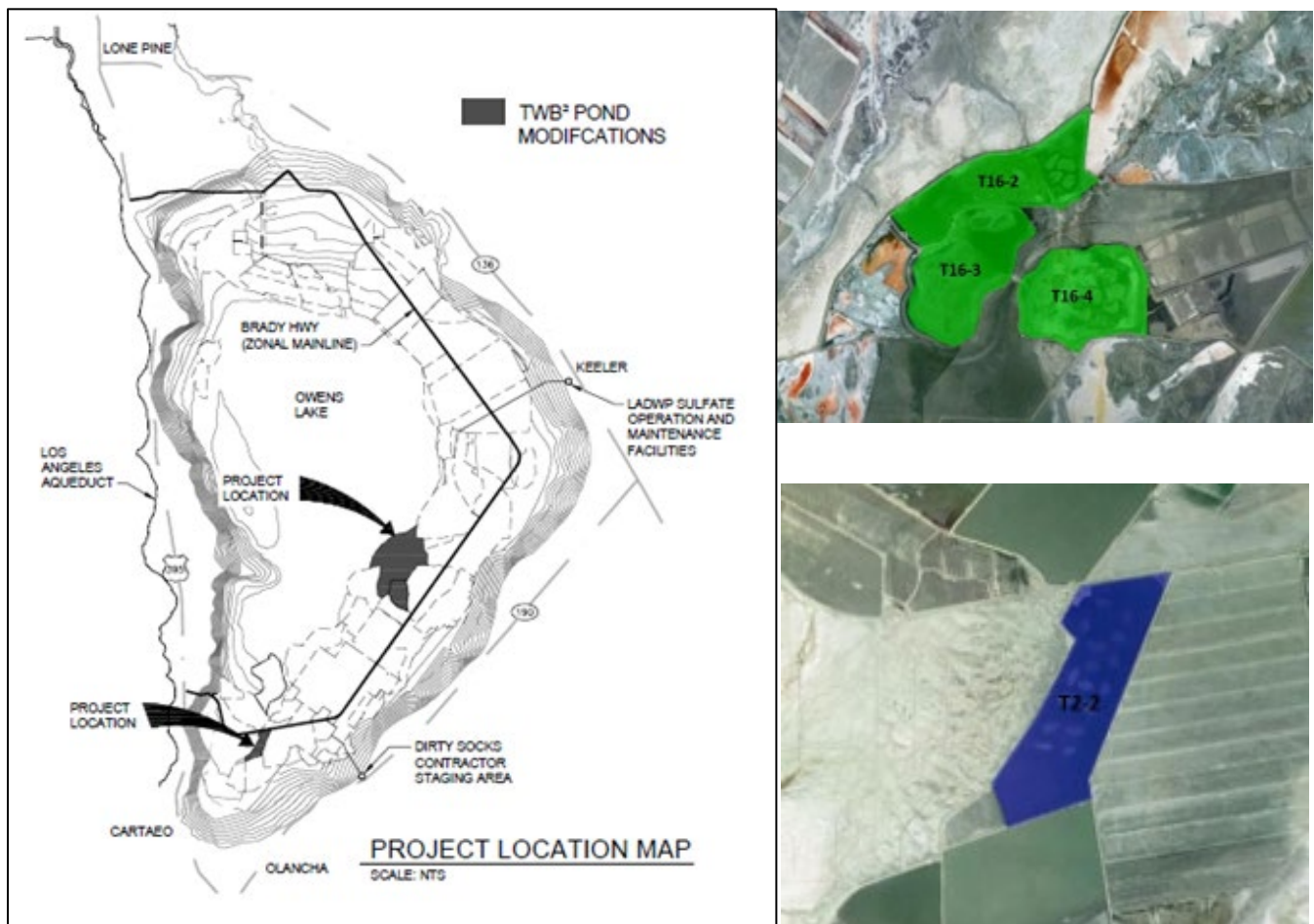
<b>LEAD AGENCY SIGNATURE:</b>  Charles C. Holloway	<b>TITLE:</b> Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment	<b>DATE:</b> February 7, 2022
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# Owens Lake Tillage with Best Available Control Measure Backup (TwB2) Habitat Enhancement Scope of Work

## I. BACKGROUND

In response to the prolonged drought, in late 2014, LADWP and the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) jointly proposed to modify 11 existing shallow-flooding areas to reduce water use on Owens Lake. TwB2 is approximately 4.12 square miles and it includes the following DCAs: T3SW, T3SE, T3NE, T2-2, T2-3, T16, T2-4, T5-4, T29-4, T3SE Addition, and T24 Addition.

The project also required that the baseline habitat values for the TwB2 project areas be maintained. Using the Habitat Suitability Model (HSM LADWP 2014), two of the DCAs (T2-2 and T16) were designed and planned as shallow flood habitat ponds to maintain the habitat value of the entire TwB2 project area. In T2-2, approximately 100 acres were converted to shallow flood ponds with islands. In T16, 685 acres were converted to tillage and the remaining 375 acres to shallow flood ponds with islands and other features designed to maintain habitat value including precise water depths and salinity management infrastructure (See Figure 1 for a map of the T2-2 and T16 project areas).



## **Justification / Compliance Requirements**

In recent years, monitoring of the two habitat ponds found that HSM modeled habitat values were below target levels due to operational difficulties with salinity management and water distribution. As required in the 2014 EIR Addenda, the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) and the Lakebed Alteration Agreement with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the TwB2 project is required to maintain habitat value at pre-project levels.

*“2.4 Permittee shall maintain or increase Habitat Value Acres (HVA) for each wildlife guild using the Habitat Suitability Model (HSM) that has been described in the Report in the Owens Lake Master Planning Collaboration and the Project Addendums provided with the Permittee’s notification. . . .” (Lake Alteration Agreement Notification No. 1600-2014-0155-R6).*

As a result, LADWP initiated the TwB2 Remedial Action Plan and began developing designs to address the habitat issues in T16 and T2-2.

## **II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

- T2-2 Shallow Flood Habitat Pond is below target Habitat Value Acres (HVA) due to water distribution challenges, which result in difficulties with hitting target habitat water depth and some habitat islands getting submerged. The TwB2 Habitat Enhancement will grade the high spot concentrated on the southside of the pond to improve water distribution, which will allow LADWP to hit the target water depth modeled in the HSM throughout the pond.
- T16 (T16-2, T16-3, and T16-4) Shallow Flood Habitat Ponds are below target HVA due to high salinity. The TwB2 Habitat Enhancement will construct operational improvements that will improve LADWP’s ability to manage salinity in the T16 ponds and lower salinity to HSM target levels.

## **III. PROJECT DESIGN**

### **T2-2 Shallow Flood Habitat Pond**

- Grade high-elevation area on the southside of the pond
  - Area: 36 acres
  - Depth: Up to 1 foot
  - Volume: Approximately 54,000 cubic yards
- Construct three new gravel bar islands on the southside of the pond using approximately 1 acre of excavated earth to increase habitat diversity of the pond

### **T16 Shallow Flood Habitat Ponds**

- Construct new controlled outlet structures (COS) and sumps to replace/improve existing COS used to flush saline water out of T16 ponds into the T16-1 Brine area.
- Construct drainage channels to connect to pond low spots that are accumulating salts.
- Construct an additional freshwater inlet to improve freshwater distribution/mixing in ponds.

- Implement new continuous low-flow salinity management concept
  - Low-flow bypass installed to existing turnout piping (inflow system)
  - New COS (mentioned) above redesigned with down-weir (outflow system)
  - Combined, freshwater inflows and saline water discharge to T16-1 will be continuous, year-round to keep salinity levels low and prevent summer-time spikes.
- Construct pump pads (T16-1 thru T16-4) to allow for back-up water flushing
- Construct new salinity sampling stations & SCADA instrumentation to collect real-time salinity pond data. 2 salinity sampling stations each (T16-2, T16-3, and T16-4)

### **Roads**

- Minor improvements to existing roads are proposed to enable construction equipment access.

### **Schedule**

- Construction is planned to occur outside of the dust compliance period (Between July 1<sup>st</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup>).