ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project
W.O. No. C2038

Prepared for:

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District

February 2023

www.webbassociates.com

INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FOR

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project, W.O. No. C2038

Prepared for:

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
31315 Chaney Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
(951) 674-3146

Prepared by:

Albert A. Webb Associates
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February 2023

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ACRONYMS LIST

Acronym	Definition
AB 52	Assembly Bill 52
AB	Assembly Bill
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
APE	Area of Potential Effects
APN	Assessor Parcel Number
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ARL	Additional Reserve Land
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BSA	Biological Study Area
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalOES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CBC	California Building Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CH_4	Methane
CHSC	California Health and Safety Code
City	City of Lake Elsinore
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
CO_2E	Carbon Dioxide Equivalents
COR	County of Riverside
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
dBA	A-Weighted Decibels
ECOS	Environmental Conservation Online System
EIC	Eastern Information Center
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EVMWD	Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMMP	Farmland Mapping Management Program
FT	Feet
GMZ	Ground Management Zone
GP	City of Lake Elsinore General Plan
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
GWP	Global Warming Potential
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
Hz	Hertz
I-15	Interstate 15
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
IS	Initial Study
LF	Linear Feet
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
LLE SP	La Laguna Estates Specific Plan
LST	Localized Significance Threshold

MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MC	Municipal Code
mg	Million-gallon
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MRZ	Mineral Resources Zone
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Water Sewer System
MSHCP	Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
$MTCO_2e/yr$	Metric Tons Carbon Dioxide Equivalent per year
Mw	Moment Magnitude Scale
N_2O	Nitrous Oxide
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPSSA	Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
PSE	Participating Special Entity
PM-2.5	Particulate Matter Less Than 2.5 Microns in Diameter
PM-10	Particulate Matter Less Than 10 Microns in Diameter
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PVC	Polyvinyl chloride
QSD	Qualified SWPPP Developer
QSP	Qualified SWPPP Practitioner
RCA	Regional Conservation Authority
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
Reservoir	Rice Canyon Reservoir
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SARWQCB	Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
SGMA	the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act
sf	Square Feet
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SKR	Stephens' Kangaroo Rat
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SR	State Route
SRA	Source Receptor Area
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
WSC	Western Science Center

SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.), the State *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.), and the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District's Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (2020 Revision). Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District's (EVMWD or "District") is the lead agency and responsible agency for CEQA purposes.

Section 15063I of the State *CEQA Guidelines* lists the following purposes of an Initial Study

1. Provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an EIR or a negative declaration;
2. Enable an applicant or Lead Agency to modify a project, mitigating adverse impacts before an EIR is prepared, thereby enabling the project to qualify for a negative declaration;
3. Assist in the preparation of an EIR, if one is required;
4. Facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of a project;
5. Provide documentation of the factual basis for the finding in a negative declaration that a project will not have a significant effect on the environment;
6. Eliminate unnecessary EIRs; and
7. Determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used with the project.

According to Section 15070 (Decision to prepare a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration) of Article 6 (Negative Declaration Process) of the State *CEQA Guidelines*:

> A public agency shall prepare or have prepared a proposed negative or mitigated negative declaration for a project subject to CEQA when:
>
> a) The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or
>
> b) The initial study identified potentially significant effects, but:
>
> 1) Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed mitigated negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and
>
> 2) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

This IS/MND is organized as follows:

1. Introduction, which provides the context for review along with applicable citation pursuant to CEQA and the State *CEQA Guidelines*, discusses the purpose and need for the project

2. Project Description describes the proposed Project.

3. Environmental Checklist Form, which as suggested in Section 15063(d)(3) of the State *CEQA Guidelines* provides an environmental impact assessment consisting of EVMWD's environmental checklist and accompanying analysis for responding to the checklist questions. The Form is used to evaluate whether or not there are any significant environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed Project.

4. References, which includes a list of reference sources, the location of reference material used in the preparation of this IS/MND, and identifies those responsible for preparation of the IS/MND and other parties contacted during the preparation of the IS/MND.

1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

The environmental process being undertaken for the proposed Project began with the project's proposal and environmental research. Pursuant to Section 15073 of the State *CEQA Guidelines*, the Draft IS/MND will be circulated for a 30-day period to the State Clearinghouse, responsible agencies, and interested parties for review and comment. Comments received from the public review period for this Project and EVMWD's responses to each comment will be included in the Response to Comments document.

SECTION 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

This Initial Study analyzes the construction and operation of the proposed Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit project ("Project"), which is proposed by Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD or "District"). The Project site is approximately 2.6 acres, which includes the District's access road to its Rice Canyon Reservoir (Reservoir) as well as a project staging area.[1] The access road is approximately 2,500 feet long and 40-feet wide and extends from the terminus of Dale Court to the Reservoir which is operated by EVMWD. Specifically, the Project site is located west of Dale Court in the City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California within Section 28, Township 5 South, Range 5 West, San Bernardino Base and Meridian. **Figure 1 – Vicinity Map**, **Figure 2 – Aerial Map**, and **Figure 3 – USGS Topographic Map** depict the regional location and local vicinity of the Project site, respectively.

The elevations of the Project site range from approximately 1,650 feet above mean sea level (amsl) at the lowest point near Dale Court, at the eastern portion of the Project site, to approximately 1,780 feet amsl, the highest point near the Reservoir, at the western portion of the Project site. The Project site consists of portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 394-140-001, -003, -004, and 394-150-001, and -011. APN 394-140-001, which contains the District's Reservoir, is owned by the City of Lake Elsinore.

The Project site has a City of Lake Elsinore General Plan land use designation of "Specific Plan – La Laguna Estates" and zoning designation of "Natural Open Space – La Laguna Estates Specific Plan." The area surrounding the Project site to the west, north, and south is currently dominated by conserved open space with a Specific Plan land use designation of "Natural Open Space." The land to the east of the Project has a Specific Plan land use designation of "Single Family Detached." Refer to **Figure 4 – General Plan Land Use** and **Figure 5 – Specific Plan Land Use**.

At the time of this writing, EVMWD is in the process of acquiring ownership of the Project access road. By way of background, the access road portion of parcel nos. 394-140-003, -004, and 394-150-001, -011 were originally part of the La Laguna Estates Specific Plan. On March 15, 2018, the developer of the La Laguna Estates Specific Plan recorded a Declaration of Restrictive Covenant (Document No. 2018-0099016) over a large area including the Project site (except the reservoir parcel) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as a mitigation easement for impacts to Waters of the U.S. resulting from the Specific Plan. On that same day, March 15, 2018, under Document No. 2018-0099288, the Project parcels were donated as Additional Reserve Land (ARL) to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) as part of the La Laguna Estates Specific Plan Donation (RC1000026; Project ID 18-009; Acquired 3/15/2018) and the District's access road to its reservoir was not removed from the USACE easement or ARL donation. Therefore, the District is working to remove the Project site from the ARL and obtain approval from the USACE for removing the Project site from the USACE easement. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish Wildlife (CDFW) reviewed EVMWD's Rice Canyon Replacement Land Equivalency Report (WEBB-A which proposed the land exchange of 2.60 acres. On February 3, 2023, the USFWS and CDFW determined the proposed land exchange was consistent with the biological conservation reserve assembly goals of the MSHCP and thus concurred with the proceeding of the proposed land exchange. Therefore, the District's access road

[1] Based on current plans, the Project limits include 2.56 acres; however, this document will round to approximately 2.6 acres.

can be removed from the reserve assembly and the District's replacement property added into the reserve assembly so that there is no decrease in reserve lands.

The Project site is located within the MSHCP Elsinore Area Plan and Alberhill Plan Subunit Area. The Project site is in Criteria Cells 4250 and 4251 and is adjacent to Criteria Cells 4153 and 4154. The District is not a Permittee nor a Participating Special Entity (PSE) to the MSHCP.

Project Background

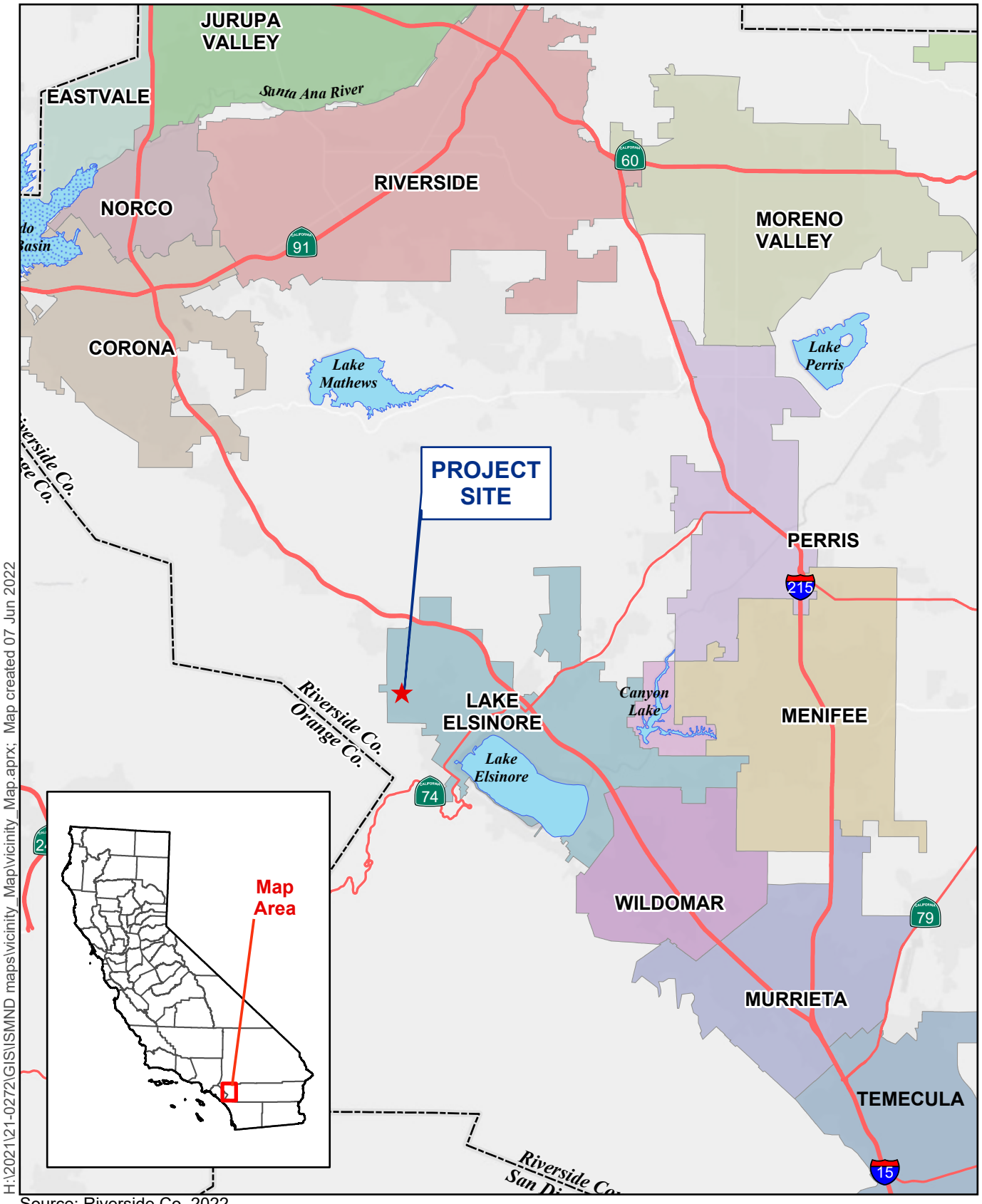
Since 1992, EVMWD has owned and operated the 1.5-million-gallon (MG) Rice Canyon Reservoir to provide potable water to its customers. EVMWD also owns and operates a 16-inch diameter polyvinyl chloride (PVC) water pipeline and a 3-inch diameter PVC electrical conduit both buried within the District's earthen access road, which extends approximately one-half mile from Dale Court to the Reservoir. Rice Canyon Creek is a seasonally dry streambed flows through the canyon, next to the Reservoir and across the access road in three locations where the District previously constructed three concrete low water crossings; each approximately 15 feet wide and 35 feet long.

In 2018, the open space surrounding the Reservoir and access road sustained fire damage as a result of the Holy Fire. The Holy Fire burned more than 23,000 acres in Riverside and Orange Counties. Subsequently, the storms of winter 2018/2019 resulted in high intensity and debris-ladened flows in Rice Canyon Creek because the native vegetation had been burned in the fire. The impacts from the winter storms resulted in the State of California declaring a State of Emergency for Orange and Riverside Counties since the effects of the Holy Fire threatened critical infrastructure, thousands of homes, and other structures.

The flood events in Rice Canyon Creek that followed the Holy Fire in 2018/2019 damaged the EVMWD access road to the District's Reservoir including damage to three concrete low water crossings and the electrical conduit to the reservoir. The District's 16-inch diameter potable water pipeline beneath the access road was not damaged. The damage made the road impassable by vehicles and the reservoir lost its power source and remote connection to the District's monitoring (SCADA) system. Because power was lost, the reservoir's anti-corrosion system was turned off and corrosion began to occur inside the reservoir which poses a threat to its structural integrity. In 2019, the District obtained environmental permits (i.e., Emergency Notification to California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional General Permit 63 Notification to California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Santa Ana Region)[2] to perform emergency repairs to the access road, however subsequent rain events continued to damage the access road. Currently, the Reservoir operates on a solar-power and battery system that is meant to be temporary and District maintenance vehicles are still unable to use the full extent of the access road.

On July 22, 2020, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) awarded the District a disaster relief funding grant to repair the Reservoir access road and electrical conduit.

[2] The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined the emergency repair to be exempt from Clean Water Act section 404 permitting pursuant to 33 CFR 323.4(a)(2).



H:\2021\21-0272\GIS\SMND maps\vicinity_Map\vicinity_Map.aprx: Map created 07 Jun 2022

Source: Riverside Co. 2022

Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

0 2 4 6 Miles

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H:\2021\21-0272\GIS\ISMND maps\aerial_Map\aerial_Map.aprx; Map created 06 Jun 2022

Sources: Riverside Co. GIS, 2020

0 250 500 750 Feet

Figure 2 - Aerial Map

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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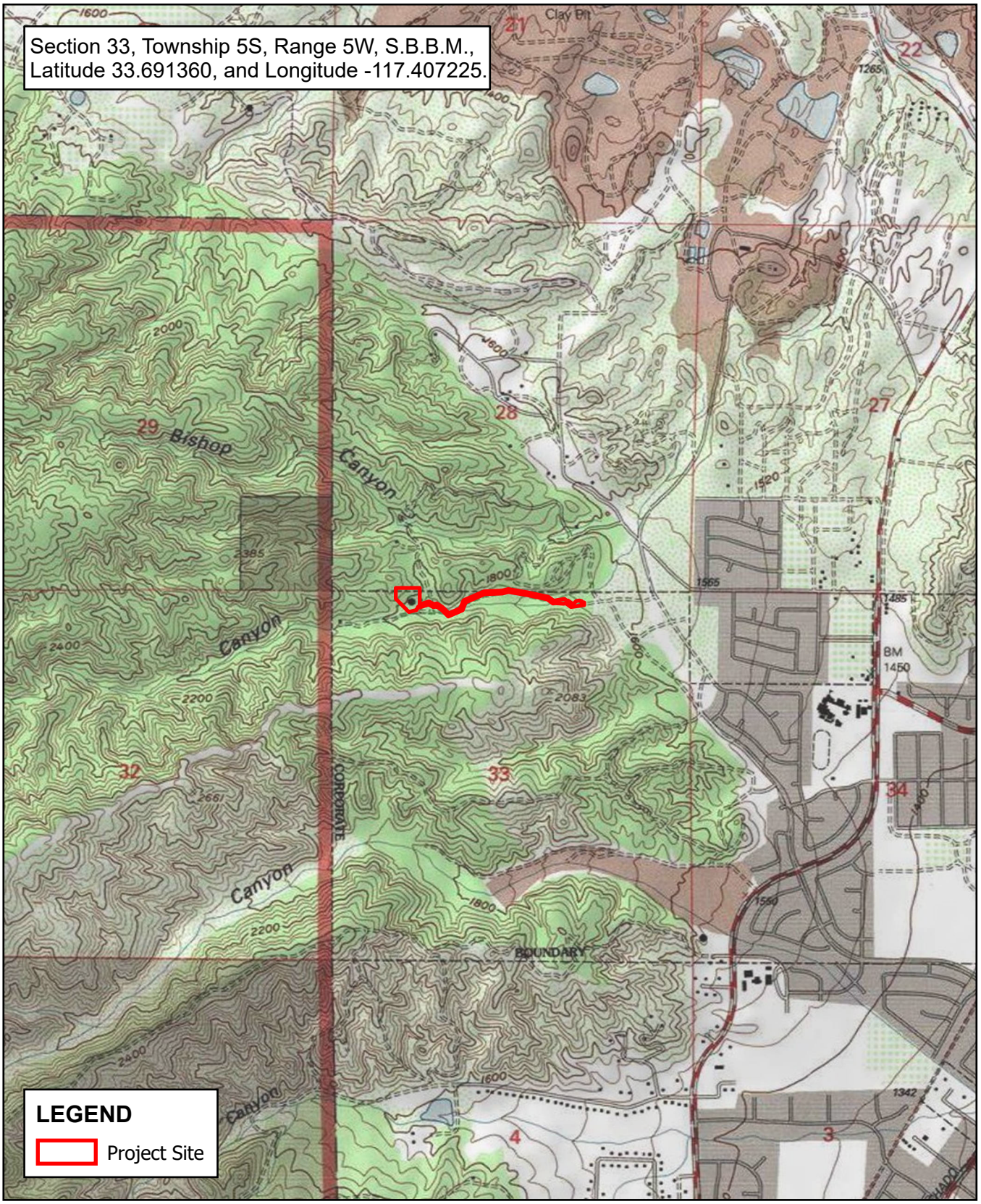

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Sources: ESRI / USGS 7.5min Quad

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 Feet

Figure 3 - USGS Topographic Map

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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Source: Riverside Co. GIS 2020,
Lake Elsinore General Land Use Plan 2014.

0 250 500 750 Feet

Figure 4 - General Plan Land Use

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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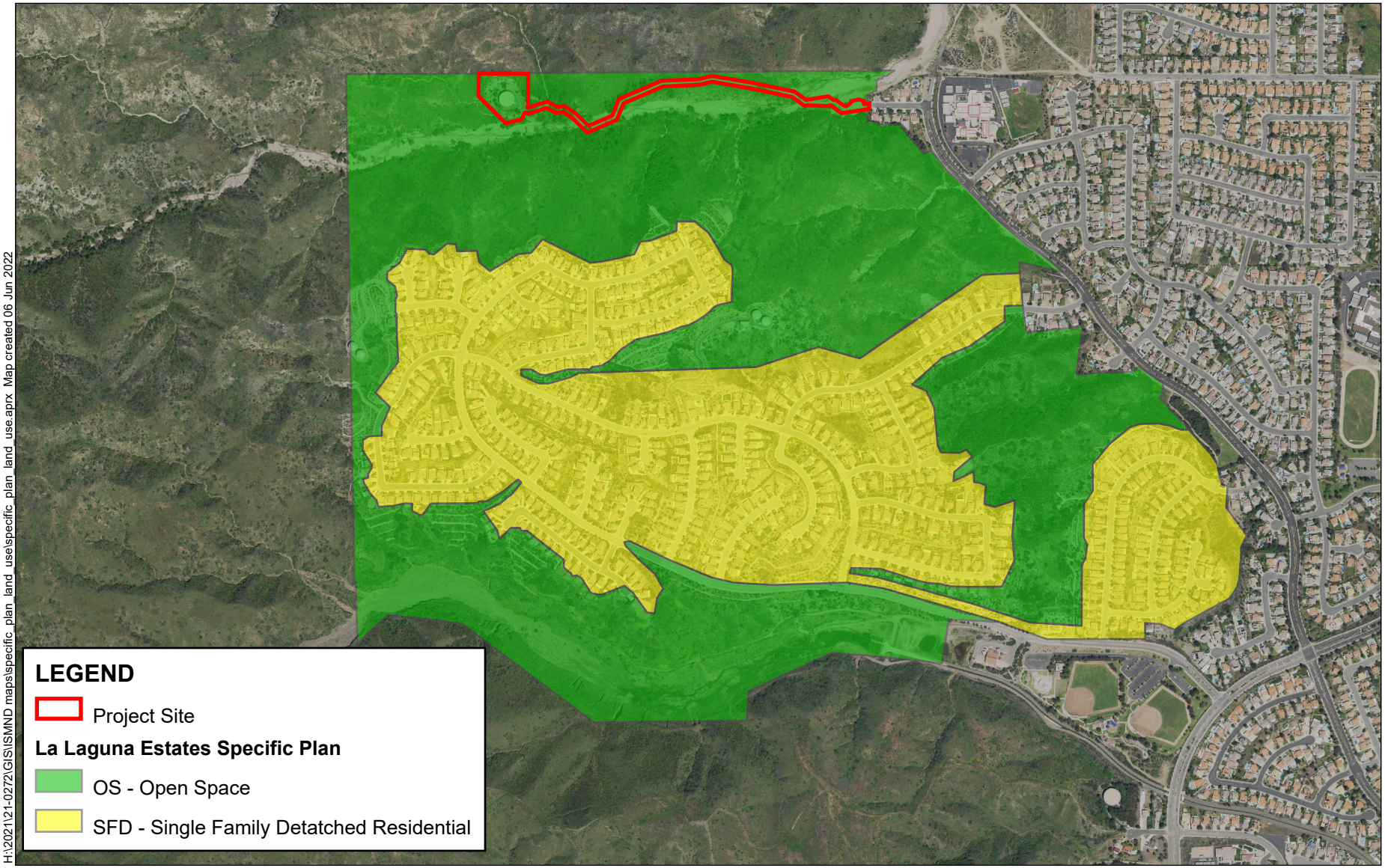

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Source: Riverside Co. GIS 2020,
Specific plans in Lake Elsinore 2021.

0 500 1,000 1,500 Feet

Figure 5 - Specific Plan Land Use

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The improvements proposed as part of the Project aim to restore permanent access to the District's Rice Canyon Reservoir, while protecting the existing 16-inch water pipeline and the proposed electrical conduit from future flooding and vehicle traffic. To that end, the proposed Project includes the following components: (1) replace the existing electrical conduit; (2) replace the three existing concrete low water crossings; (3) clear vegetation, regrade and compact the access road, and construct earthen drainage swales along the road in areas where natural ditches have already formed; (4) perform reservoir rehabilitation repairs; and (5) ongoing maintenance of roadway to keep clear for access. All Project-related activities are planned and designed to stay within the proposed Project footprint (**Figure 2**). At completion of Project construction, the District will have full power and communication to the Reservoir as well as a usable access road that can be maintained in perpetuity by the District and concrete low water crossings. Refer to **Figure 6 – Project Access Road Overview**.

The proposed Project improvements would be constructed in two phases: the first phase consisting of the conduit and road repairs lasting approximately three months and the second phase consisting of the reservoir rehabilitation lasting another 9-12 months. Earthwork is expected to be balanced for this Project (i.e., equal cut and fill volumes). Construction is expected to commence no earlier than 2024. A typical construction work schedule of weekdays during daylight hours is expected.

1. Replace Electrical Conduit

The proposed Project includes replacing the existing 3-inch diameter electrical conduit with up to two new conduits: two 3-inch diameter conduits with 3-inches (minimum) red concrete encasement in between and around each conduit. The conduit will be constructed within the existing approximately 2,500 linear feet (LF) access road from approximately the terminus of Dale Court to the Reservoir. The proposed electrical conduits would include approximately five pull boxes along the conduit alignment.

2. Replace Concrete Low Water Crossings

Currently, the three concrete low-flow water crossings (Crossings A, B, and C) cover an area of approximately 1,500 square feet (0.034 acre). They have been damaged to the extent they are unusable. The crossings will be replaced with two new concrete low-flow crossings (Crossing A+B and Crossing C) that total approximately 0.2-acre in surface area (9,029 square feet). Existing Crossings A and B which are separate will be combined into one stretch of concrete ("Crossing A+B") that is 487 feet long and 12 feet wide. The purpose of combining Crossings A and B is to provide protection for the segment of road that is within the 100-year mapped floodplain of the creek. Existing Crossing C will be replaced with a new low flow Crossing C that is 266 feet long and 12 feet wide. Crossing C will extend along the access road until the proposed access road elevations are higher than the calculated water surface elevations from the hydraulic modeling analysis (Dudek 2022). The maximum depth of excavation is approximately eight feet at the low-flow crossings and the remainder of the Project would have a maximum depth of four feet. The proposed dimensions of the concrete crossings are shown below.

Surface Dimensions of Concrete Low-Flow Crossings			
Crossing	**Concrete Length (FT)**	**Concrete Width (FT)**	**Concrete Area (SF)**
A+B	487	12	5,842
C	266	12	3,187
Total	**753**	**-**	**9,029 (0.2 acre)**

Source: Dudek 2022. *Preliminary Design Report and 30% Submittal Plans.*
Notes: FT = feet; SF = square feet.

Each creek crossing will have upstream and downstream underground sloped cut-off walls that cover an additional subsurface footprint of 0.2-acre; the dimensions of each are shown below and a typical cross-section is shown on **Figure 7 – Design Details**. The upstream cutoff wall provides scour protection against entering flows from approaching underneath the low water crossing slab, which could cause scouring and undermining of the crossing. Undermining can cause cracking and collapse of the slabs and potential damage to electrical and water conduits as the underlying material is eroded away. The downstream cutoff wall prevents exiting flows from scouring and undermining of the crossing as flows runoff the low flow crossing and enter the downstream channel.

Dimensions of Underground Cut-Off Walls			
Crossing	**Upstream Underground Footprint (SF)**	**Downstream Underground Footprint (SF)**	**Maximum Depth of Excavation (FT)**
A+B	1,673	2,068	8
C	952	1,140	8

Source: Dudek 2022. *Preliminary Design Report and 30% Submittal Plans.*
Notes: FT = feet; SF = square feet.

Slope stabilization is warranted at the downstream side of proposed Crossing C because of the steepness of proposed grade. Class V (one-quarter ton) grouted riprap is proposed for the slope stabilization and the dimensions are shown below:

Dimensions of Downstream Slope Stabilization				
Crossing	**Length (FT)**	**Width (FT)**	**Height (FT)**	**Area (SF)**
A+B[1]	-[2]	-[2]	Varies, 3.5 to 6	862
C	75	17	Varies, 3 to 7	267

Source: Dudek 2022. *Preliminary Design Report and 30% Submittal Plans.*
Notes: FT = feet; SF = square feet.
1. Refer to 60% Design Drawings
2. Proposed riprap is an irregular polygon, refer to **Figure 6 – Project Access Road Overview**

Additional riprap is required on the west side of Crossing A+B and midway down the access road as shown in **Figure 6 – Project Access Road Overview,** to dissipate water velocity from the hillside and help reduce potential erosion to the roadway.

3. Road Repair

The Project will improve the function of the existing access road and allow the District to perform ongoing maintenance of the access road to its full width of 40-feet in perpetuity if so desired. Earthen

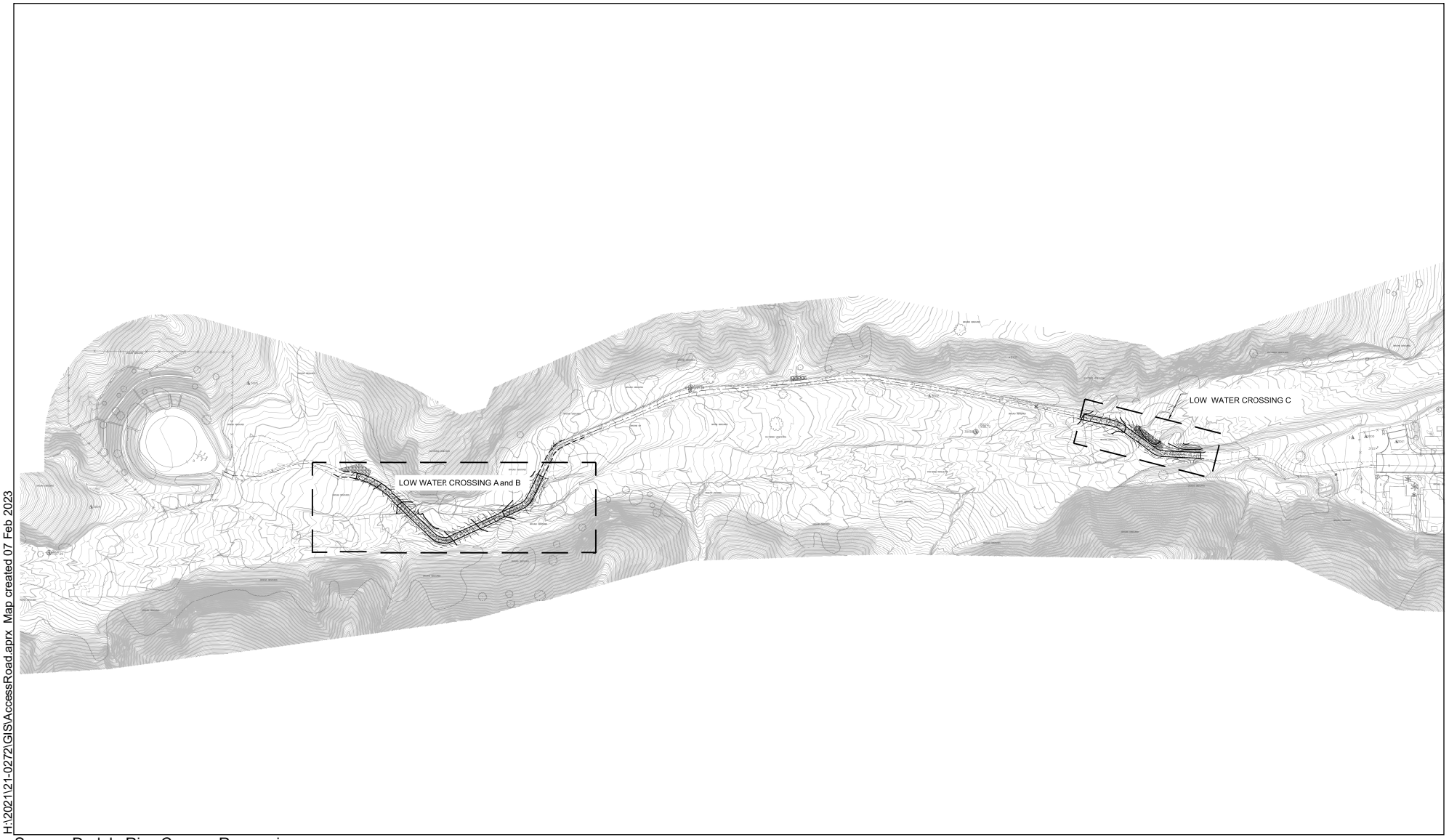
drainage swales are proposed along the road in areas where natural ditches have already formed. The portions of the access road that are not in the low water crossings will remain earthen. **Figure 7** shows the typical access road detail.

4. Reservoir Rehabilitation

The Project will include essential anti-corrosion repairs (i.e., cathodic protection system), structural retrofit, safety improvements, and recoating to the interior and exterior of the Rice Canyon Reservoir (Dudek 2020). These repairs will require partial emptying of the reservoir and may take 9 to 12 months to complete.

5. Maintenance

Maintenance of the access road will include grading portions of the access road at a minimum once per year, or as needed to maintain vehicular access to the reservoir. As-needed maintenance may also include vegetation clearing within the Project limits.



H:\2021\21-0272\GIS\AccessRoad.aprx Map created 07 Feb 2023

Source: Dudek, Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road Design 1/24/23.

Not to Scale

Figure 6 – Project Access Road Overview

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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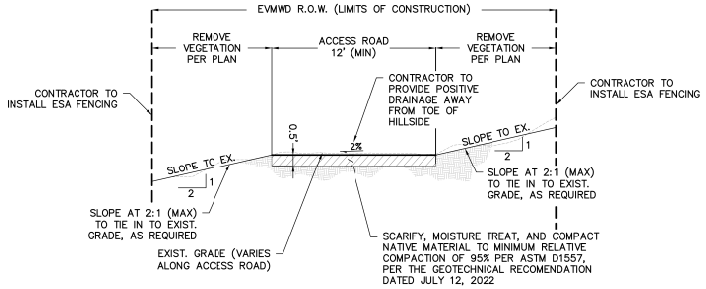
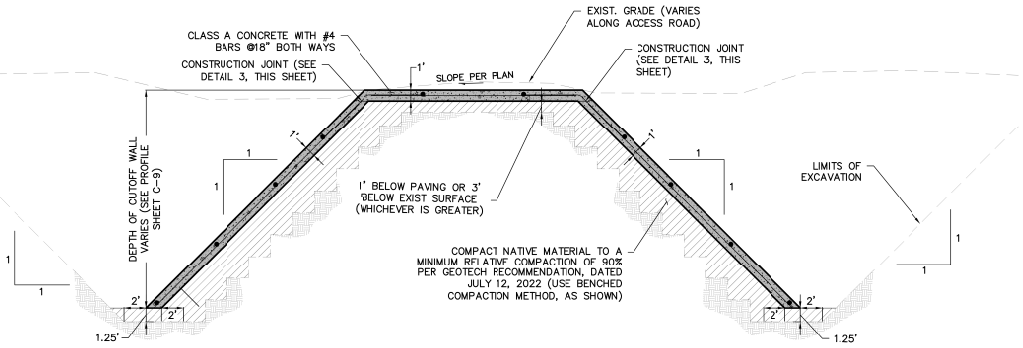
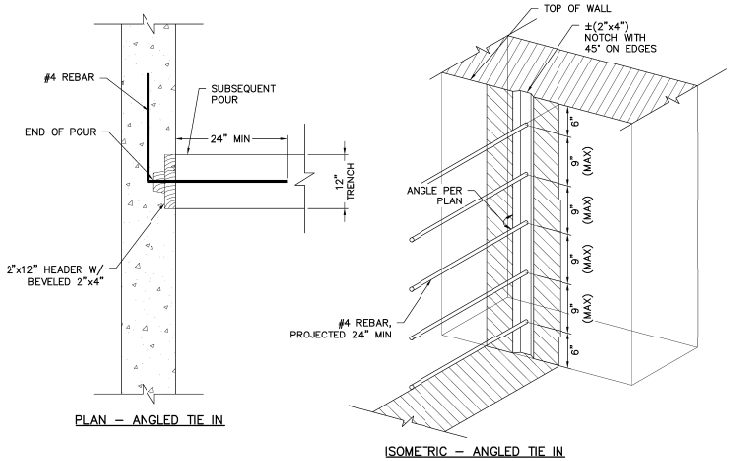


TYPICAL ACCESS ROAD SECTION 1
NOT TO SCALE



CUTOFF WALL DETAIL 2
NOT TO SCALE



CONSTRUCTION JOINT 3
NOT TO SCALE

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Source: Dudek, Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road Design 1/27/23.

Not to Scale

Figure 7 – Design Details

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

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2.3 PROJECT APPROVALS

The following approvals and permits are required for EVMWD to implement the proposed Project:

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit if the project will discharge material into waters under the jurisdiction of the USACE.
- USACE: Acceptance of removing the Project site from La Laguna Estates Specific Plan conservation easement.

STATE AGENCIES

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. Lake and Streambed Alteration Notification.
- Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board: Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, if the Project will require a Section 404 permit from the USACE.
- State Water Resources Control Board: Coverage under the statewide stormwater construction general permit.

LOCAL AGENCIES

- Regional Conservation Authority: Transfer of ownership of the access road area to EVMWD.

2.4 DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The following reports and/or studies are applicable to development of the Project site and are hereby incorporated by reference:

- *General Plan*, *City of Lake Elsinore*, adopted on December 13, 2011 (GP). (Available at http://www.lake-elsinore.org/city-hall/city-departments/community-development/planning/lake-elsinore-general-plan)
- *General Plan-Certified Annotated Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report, (State Clearinghouse No. 2005121019),* August 2011, Revised December 2011 (GPEIR). (Available at http://www.lake-elsinore.org/city-hall/city-departments/community-development/planning/lake-elsinore-general-plan/general-plan-certified-eir)
- *La Laguna Estates Specific Plan Amendment No.1 Final Document, City of Lake Elsinore. Approved on Planning Commission February 4, 2003,* approved by City Council February 25, 2003 (LLESP). (Available at http://www.lake-elsinore.org/home/showdocument?id=11719)

These reports/studies are also available for review at:

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
31315 Chaney Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
(951) 674-3146
Hours: Monday – Thursday: 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM and Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM

SECTION 3.0 INITIAL STUDY

This analysis has been undertaken, pursuant to the provisions of CEQA, to provide Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District with the factual basis for determining, based on the information available, the form of environmental documentation the Project warrants. The basis for each of the findings listed in the attached Form is explained in the Explanation of Checklist Responses following the checklist.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District **31315 Chaney Street** **Lake Elsinore, CA 92530**	
Project Title	Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project, W.O. No. C2038
Lead Agency Name and Address	Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District 31315 Chaney Street Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
Contact Person and Phone Number	Andrea Kraft, Assistant Engineer (951) 674-3146, ext. 8312
Project Location	The proposed Project site is located within the southwestern portion of the City of Lake Elsinore directly west of the intersection of Dale Court and Lincoln Street on approximately 2.6 acres as shown on **Figure 1 –Vicinity Map** and **Figure 2 – Aerial Map**. The Project consists of portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN's) 394-140-001, -003, -004, and 394-150-001, and -011 located in Sections 28 and 33 of Township 5 South, Range 5 West on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Alberhill*, California 7.5 -Minute Quadrangle Map as shown on **Figure 3 – USGS Topographical Map**.
Project Sponsor's Name and Address	Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Attn: Andrea Kraft, Assistant Engineer 31315 Chaney Street Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
General Plan Designation	Specific Plan-La Laguna Estates Specific Plan
Zoning	La Laguna Estates Specific Plan
Specific Plan Designation	Open Space
Description of Project	The improvements proposed as part of the Project aim to restore permanent access to the District's Rice Canyon Reservoir, while protecting the existing 16-inch water pipeline and the proposed electrical conduit from future flooding and vehicle traffic. To that end, the proposed Project

	includes the following components: (1) replace the existing electrical conduit; (2) replace the three existing concrete low water crossings; (3) clear vegetation, regrade and compact the access road, and construct earthen drainage swales along the road in areas where natural ditches have already formed; (4) perform reservoir rehabilitation repairs; and (5) ongoing maintenance of roadway to keep clear for access. All Project-related activities are planned and designed to stay within the proposed Project footprint. At completion of Project construction, the District will have full power and communication to the Reservoir as well as a usable access road that can be maintained in perpetuity by the District and concrete low water crossings. Refer to **Figure 6 – Project Access Road Overview**. The proposed Project includes replacing the existing 3-inch diameter electrical conduit with up to two new conduits. The conduit will be constructed within the existing approximately 2,500 linear feet (LF) access road from approximately the terminus of Dale Court to the Reservoir. The proposed electrical conduits would include approximately five pull boxes along the conduit alignment. Existing onsite crossings will be replaced with two new concrete low-flow crossings (Crossing A+B and Crossing C) that total approximately 0.2-acre in surface area (9,036 square feet). Existing Crossings A and B will be combined into one stretch of concrete ("Crossing A+B") that is 487 feet long and 12 feet wide. Each creek crossing will have upstream and downstream underground sloped cut-off walls that cover an additional subsurface footprint of 0.2-acre; the dimensions of each are shown below and refer to **Figure 7 – Design Details**. At Crossing C Class V grouted riprap is proposed to provide slope stabilization. Additional riprap is required on the west side of Crossing A+B and midway down the access road to dissipate water velocity from the hillside and help reduce potential erosion to the roadway. Road repairs will improve the function of the existing access road. Earthen drainage swales are proposed along the road in areas where natural ditches have already formed. Maintenance of the access road will include grading portions of the access road at a minimum once per year, or as needed to maintain vehicular access to the reservoir. The Project will include essential anti-corrosion repairs (i.e., cathodic protection system), structural retrofit, safety improvements, and recoating to the interior and exterior of the Rice Canyon Reservoir. The proposed Project improvements would be constructed in two phases: the first phase consisting of the conduit and road repairs lasting approximately three months and the second phase consisting of the reservoir rehabilitation lasting another 9-12 months. Earthwork is expected to be balanced for this Project (i.e., equal cut and fill volumes). Construction is expected to commence no earlier than 2024. A typical construction work schedule of weekdays during daylight hours is expected.

<table>
<tr><td>Surrounding Land Uses and Setting
(Refer to Figure 4 – General Plan Land Use and Figure 5 – Specific Plan Land Use)</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Boundary</th><th>General Plan Land Use</th><th>Zoning</th><th>Specific Plan Land Use</th><th>Existing Land Use</th></tr>
<tr><td>North</td><td>Open Space</td><td>Open Space</td><td>N/A</td><td>Open Space</td></tr>
<tr><td>East</td><td>Low Medium Residential</td><td>R1 Single Family Residential</td><td>N/A</td><td>Residential Community</td></tr>
<tr><td>South</td><td>Specific Plan</td><td>La Laguna Estates Specific Plan</td><td>Open Space and Single Family Detached</td><td>Open Space and Residential Community</td></tr>
<tr><td>West</td><td>Specific Plan</td><td>La Laguna Estates Specific Plan</td><td>Open Space</td><td>Open Space</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other public agencies whose approval is required</td><td>

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit if the project will discharge material into waters under the jurisdiction of the USACE.
USACE: Acceptance of removing the Project site from La Laguna Estates Specific Plan conservation easement.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife: California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. Lake and Streambed Alteration Notification.
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board: Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, if the Project will require a Section 404 permit from the USACE.
State Water Resources Control Board: Coverage under the statewide stormwater construction general permit.
Regional Conservation Authority: Transfer of ownership of the access road area to EVMWD.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?</td><td>Yes. The City's compliance with Assembly Bill (AB 52) is discussed in Threshold 18a(ii) below.</td></tr>
</table>

SECTION 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

A summary of the environmental factors potentially affected by this project, consisting of a Potentially Significant Impact or Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, include:

☒ Aesthetic	☐ Agricultural Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☒ Geology /Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emission	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology / Water Quality	☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☒ Noise	☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities / Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

SECTION 5.0 DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there would 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 would 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.

Signature of Lead Agency Representative — Date: 2/13/23

Jason Dafforn, Director of Engineering and Water Resources — Printed name

Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District — Agency

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

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 may be 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). Earlier analyses are discussed below:

   a. Earlier Analysis 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 measure 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). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated. A source list should be attached and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) 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 significant.

5.1. AESTHETICS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, 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 point) 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 which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☒	☐	☐

References: CAL-SH, GPEIR

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

1a. **Less than significant impact.** Scenic vistas can be defined as the view of an area that is visually or aesthetically pleasing. Development projects can potentially impact scenic vistas in two ways: 1) directly diminishing the scenic quality of the vista, or 2) by blocking the view corridors or "vistas" of scenic resources. The Santa Ana Mountains/Cleveland National Forest are considered scenic resources of the City of Lake Elsinore (City) (GPEIR, p. 3.3-2). The proposed Project site is located in Rice Canyon, which is one of several canyons at the base of the Santa Ana Mountains/Cleveland National Forest within the City limits. The canyon can be viewed from the residential neighborhood located downslope of the canyon mouth. The canyon is surrounded on three sides by conservation land that will not be developed. Visually, the Project site contains a 1.5 MG water reservoir, Rice Canyon Creek, and the District's access road, which is surrounded by large and small trees and native undergrowth. The existing access road is located at the end of Dale Court, which is a residential road. However, due to the curved alignment of the access road through the canyon, the majority of the access road and the water reservoir is not visible from public view, as shown in **Figure 8 – Project Site Photographs.**[3] As previously described, this access road has been damaged; therefore, the proposed Project would restore EVMWD staff access to the reservoir site. These changes would take place at grade and would not introduce new above-ground structures, or obstacles that would substantially alter the existing views of the canyon. Construction of the Project will change the appearance of the access road at grade. Because the District's proposed access road is 40-feet wide and the road is currently between 10-15-feet wide, the District may exercise its right in

[3] Figure will commence at the end of this section on page 23.

the future to clearing the full width of the access road, which would remove vegetation and further change the appearance of the access road. However, for the reasons outlined above, the clearing of a 40-foot wide path would not be a substantial effect to the overall canyon as viewed from the downslope neighborhood. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

1b. **No impact.** There are no designated scenic highways in the Project vicinity. The Project site is located approximately 3.16 miles southwest of Interstate 15 (I-15), and approximately 2.3 miles northwest of State Route 74 (SR-74). Both I-15 and SR-74 are listed as "eligible" state scenic highways. (CAL-SH) As mentioned in *Threshold 1a,* above, views from Dale Court would not be substantially altered since the appearance of the existing access road would only change at grade. Therefore, since the Project site is not located within a state scenic highway, the Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and historical buildings within a state scenic highway. Thus, no impacts would occur.

1c. **Less than significant impact.** The Project is located in a non-urbanized area located at the outer edge of an urbanized area. Public viewing is generally limited to the cul-de-sac of Dale Court. The Project consists of replacing an existing access road, electrical conduit, and rehabilitating the three existing concrete low-water crossings. As such, the Project will not introduce any new above-ground structures that would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the proposed Project will have less than significant impacts.

1d. **Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.** The proposed Project will consist of repairs to the buried conduit, access road, and interior of the reservoir and therefore will not introduce an additional source of light or glare. During construction the Project may require temporary nighttime lighting as part of the security for construction equipment. Due to the distance between the construction area and the nearby conservation lands and residences, such security lights may result in glare to residents and wildlife. However, this potential impact will be reduced to a less than significant level through the District's standard project review and approval process and with implementation of mitigation measure **MM AES-1**.

> **MM AES-1**: If temporary nighttime lights for security purposes are determined necessary by the District, then the Project contractor shall install temporary nighttime lights for security purposes that are downward facing and hooded or shielded to prevent security light spillage outside of the staging area or direct broadcast of security light into the sky. Evidence of downward facing and hooded or shielded lights installed on the Project site shall be submitted to the District.

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PHOTOGRAPH 1

PHOTOGRAPH 2

PHOTOGRAPH 3

PHOTOGRAPH 4

H:\2021\21-0272\GIS\SMND maps\site_photos\site_photos.aprx Map created 07 Jun 2022

Source: ESRI, EVMWD Coastal California Gnatcatcher Report 2022

Figure 8 - Project Site Photographs

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

5.2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: COR GP EIR, FMMP, GPEIR, Zoning Map

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

2a. **No impact.** The proposed Project site is classified as Other Land[4] by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). Per Section 21060.1 of the State *CEQA Guidelines,* Other Land is not considered Farmland. Because there is no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance at the Project site, there will not be any new significant impacts related to conversion of Farmland. Thus, no impact would occur.

2b. **No impact.** According to the City's Zoning Map, the Project site and the surrounding area are not zoned for agricultural uses. (Zoning Map) As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with the existing zoning for agricultural use. The City, including the Project site, does not contain Williamson Act agricultural preserves. As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with a Williamson Act Contract. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

[4] Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres.

2c. **No impact.** The Project site is zoned La Laguna Estates Specific Plan with a La Laguna Estates Specific Plan land use designation of Open Space. There are no existing or proposed zoning of forest land, timber land, or Timberland Production Zones within the City. Accordingly, there is no commercial forestry or timber production industry within the City. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact on forestland, timberland, or a Timberland Production Zone. Thus, no impact would occur.

2d. **No impact.** As discussed in *Threshold 2c*, above, there is no land zoned forest land within the City. Further, there are no existing land use designations explicitly for timber production zones or other commercial timber activities within the larger County of Riverside area. (COR GP EIR, p. 4.5-36) Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will have no impact on land zoned for forest land and will not result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest uses. Thus, no impact would occur.

2e. **No impact.** As discussed in *Thresholds 2a – 2d* above, there is no Farmland or forest land in the immediate vicinity of the Project site. As mentioned in the Project description, the Project consists of repairs to existing access road, an existing electrical conduit and rehabilitation to the three existing concrete low-water crossings within Rice Canyon. Therefore, implementation of the Project will not result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Thus, no impact would occur.

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5.3. AIR QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 in non-attainment under an 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: CalEEMod, CARB-A, SCAQMD-A, SCAQMD-B, SCAQMD-C, SCAQMD-D

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

3a. **No impact.** The Project is located in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) prepares the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Basin. The SCAQMD sets forth a comprehensive program that would lead the Basin into compliance with all federal and state air quality standards. The AQMP's control measures and related emission reduction estimates are based upon emissions projections for a future development scenario derived from land use, population, and employment characteristics defined in consultation with local governments. Accordingly, if a project demonstrates compliance with local land use plans and/or population projections, then the AQMP would have taken into account such uses when it was developed. The SCAQMD is required to update its plans on a regular basis; the 2022 AQMP is the currently approved plan (SCAQMD-A).

Since the proposed Project consists of improvements to existing public infrastructure that in and of itself will not result in any changes to the existing land use patterns, the proposed Project does not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP and no impacts would occur.

3b. **Less than significant impact.** The portion of the Basin within which the proposed Project site is located is designated as a non-attainment area for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10) under state standards, and for ozone and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM-2.5) under both state and federal standards (CARB-A). The SCAQMD considers the thresholds for project-specific impacts and cumulative impacts to be the same (SCAQMD-B). Therefore, projects that exceed project-specific significance thresholds are considered by SCAQMD to be cumulatively considerable. Based on the SCAQMD's regulatory jurisdiction over regional air quality in the Basin, it is reasonable to rely on its thresholds to determine whether there is a cumulative air quality impact.

Air quality impacts can be described in a short- and long-term perspective. Short-term impacts occur during site grading and Project construction and consist of fugitive dust and other particulate matter, as well as exhaust emissions generated by construction-related vehicles.

Long-term air quality impacts occur once the Project is in operation. Since the Project consists of improvements to restore and rehabilitate existing infrastructure, operational emissions would be primarily from the infrequent visits by vehicles and equipment driven and operated by maintenance personnel and would be similar to or less than the short-term emissions estimated; therefore, only short-term impacts were evaluated for the Project.

The Project will also be required to comply with existing SCAQMD rules for the reduction of fugitive dust emissions. SCAQMD Rule 403 establishes these procedures. Compliance with this rule is achieved through application of standard best management practices in construction and operation activities, such as application of water or chemical stabilizers to disturbed soils, managing haul road dust by application of water, covering haul vehicles, restricting vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 mph, sweeping loose dirt from paved site access roadways, cessation of construction activity when winds exceed 25 mph and establishing a permanent, stabilizing ground cover on finished sites. In addition, projects that disturb 50 or more acres or more of soil or move 5,000 cubic yards of materials per day are required to submit a Fugitive Dust Control Plan or a Large Operation Notification Form to SCAQMD. Based on the size of this Project's disturbance area (2.6 acres), a Fugitive Dust Control Plan or a Large Operation Notification Form would not be required.

The Project's short-term emissions were modeled using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) program, version 2020.4.0. The results are summarized herein and the modeling output (cited hereinafter as CalEEMod) is included in Appendix A.

Short-term emissions consist of fugitive dust and other particulate matter, as well as exhaust emissions generated by construction-related vehicles. The default parameters within CalEEMod were used, except as identified below, and these default values generally reflect a worst-case scenario, which means that Project emissions are expected to be equal to or less than the estimated emissions.

Restoration of the access road and conduit replacement is anticipated to begin first and start no sooner than January 2024. The construction activities associated with this first phase include the clear and grubbing of the access road, rough grading, final grading, and construction of the new low-water crossings. Once the access road is complete, the reservoir rehabilitation will begin. Although reservoir rehabilitation is not anticipated to begin immediately after the access road is complete, for modeling purposes it was assumed as such. The estimated construction period for the proposed Project is approximately 14 months as identified in **Table A – Estimated Construction Schedule**.

Table A – Estimated Construction Schedule

Construction Activity	Start Date	End Date	Total Working Days
Clear and Grub	January 1, 2024	January 10, 2024	8 days
Rough Grading	January 11, 2024	January 31, 2024	15 days
Final Grading	February 1, 2024	February 9, 2024	7 days
Low Water Crossing Construction	February 19, 2024	March 29, 2024	30 days
Reservoir Rehabilitation	March 30, 2024	February 28, 2025	240 days

The construction equipment to be used for each construction activity is shown in **Table B – Construction Equipment List**. This off-road equipment list is based on engineering estimates and assumes all equipment operates 8-hours per day:

Table B – Construction Equipment List

Construction Activity	Off-Road Equipment	Unit Amount
Clear and Grub	Skid Steer Loader	1
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	2
Rough Grading	Skid Steer Loader	1
	Grader	1
	Rubber Tired Loader	1
	Roller	1
	Scraper	1
Final Grading	Skid Steer Loader	1
	Grader	1
	Rubber Tired Loader	1
	Roller	1
	Scraper	1
Low Water Crossing Construction	Skid Steer Loader	1
	Rubber Tired Loader	1
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	2
	Roller	1
Reservoir Rehabilitation	Other Material Handling Equipment[1]	2
	Aerial Lift	2
	Crane	1
	Air Compressor	2
	Generator Sets	2

Note: [1]Other Material Handling Equipment was modeled to represent Reach Forklifts.

- Restoration of the road will include grading and clearing to the road's full width of 40-feet wide. The access road will include three low water crossings that will cover a surface area of approximately 0.2 acres.
- The Reservoir Rehabilitation consists of anti-corrosion repairs and recoating. The architectural coating was modeled to include the interior and exterior surface area of the Reservoir.
- To evaluate Project compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403 for fugitive dust control, the Project utilized the mitigation option of watering the Project site three times daily which achieves a control efficiency of 61 percent for PM-10 and PM-2.5 emissions. Two (2) one-way vendor trips per day were added to the Clear and Grub, Rough Grading, and Final Grading activities to account for water truck trips.
- Six (6) one way vendor trips per day were added to the construction activities to account for the material delivery during Clear and Grub, Rough Grading, and Final Grading and Low Water Crossing Construction activities during access road restoration.
- Six (6) one way vendor trips per day were added to architectural coating activities to account for truck trips for equipment and material delivery during the Reservoir Rehabilitation phase.

Maximum daily emissions from Project construction are summarized in **Table C** – **Unmitigated Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions**, below and compared to the SCAQMD's daily regional thresholds.

Table C – Unmitigated Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions

Activity	Peak Daily Emissions (lb/day)					
	VOC	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM-10	PM-2.5
SCAQMD Daily Construction Thresholds[1]	**75**	**100**	**550**	**150**	**150**	**55**
Clear and Grub	0.39	4.01	6.23	0.01	0.54	0.21
Rough Grading	1.63	16.86	12.91	0.04	0.99	0.65
Final Grading	1.63	16.86	12.91	0.04	**1.18**	0.67
Low Water Crossing Construction	0.80	7.80	9.70	0.02	0.59	0.35
Reservoir Coating-2024	**2.81**	**16.92**	**23.69**	**0.04**	0.82	**0.74**
Reservoir Coating-2025	2.68	15.51	23.60	0.04	0.71	0.64
Maximum	**2.81**	**16.92**	**23.69**	**0.04**	**1.18**	**0.74**
Exceeds Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: CalEEMod (Appendix A)

Notes: 1 http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf?sfvrsn=2

The values shown are the maximum summer or winter daily emissions results from CalEEMod and are rounded. VOC = Volatile Organic Compounds; NO_X = Nitrogen Oxides; CO = Carbon Monoxide; SO_2= Sulfur Dioxide; PM-10 = Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size; and PM-2.5 = Particulate Matter less than 2.5 microns in size.

As shown in **Table C**, the maximum daily criteria pollutant emissions from construction of the proposed Project will be below the SCAQMD daily regional thresholds for all criteria pollutants. As such, the Project will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in criteria pollutant emissions for which the Project region is non-attainment. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3c. **Less than significant impact.** People most likely to be affected by air pollution, as identified by the SCAQMD, may include children, the elderly, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. Sensitive receptors may include residences, schools, playgrounds, athletic facilities, childcare centers, long-term healthcare facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes (SCAQMD-C). Sensitive receptors in the Project vicinity include existing residences located on Dale Court near the eastern end of the access road.

Staff at SCAQMD has developed localized significance threshold (LST) methodology (SCAQMD-C) that can be used by public agencies to determine whether or not a project may generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts (both short- and long-term). LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that will not cause or contribute to an exceedance of the state ambient air quality standard, and are developed based on the ambient concentrations of that pollutant for each source receptor area (SRA). The Project is located in SRA 25.

According to the LST methodology, only on-site emissions need to be analyzed. Emissions associated with vendor and worker trips are mobile source emissions that occur off site and are therefore not included. The emissions analyzed under the LST methodology are oxides of nitrogen (NO_2), CO, PM-10, and PM-2.5. SCAQMD has provided LST lookup tables to allow

users to readily determine if the daily emissions for proposed construction or operational activities could result in significant localized air quality impacts for projects five acres or smaller. The LST tables can be used as a screening tool to determine if dispersion modeling would be necessary. If project-related emissions are below the LST table emissions, no further analysis is necessary.

The SCAQMD's *Fact Sheet for Applying CalEEMod to Localized Significance Thresholds* is used to determine the maximum site acreage that is actively disturbed based on the construction equipment fleet and equipment hours as estimated in CalEEMod (SCAQMD-D). Based on this SCAQMD guidance and the Project's equipment list during rough grading (above), the Project will disturb approximately two acres per day during grading. Therefore, the LST for the two-acre site was used.

The LST is estimated using the maximum daily disturbed area (in acres) and the distance of the Project site to the nearest sensitive receptors (in meters). As stated above, there are sensitive receptors located near the eastern end of the access road. To provide a conservative analysis, a receptor distance of 25 meters (85 feet) was used for the analysis. The results are summarized below in **Table D – LST Results for Daily Construction Emissions**.

Table D – LST Results for Daily Construction Emissions

Activity	Peak Daily Emissions (lb/day)			
	NO_X	CO	PM-10	PM-2.5
LST for 2-acres at 25 meters	**234**	**1,100**	**7**	**4**
Clear and Grub	3.72	5.85	0.39	0.17
Rough Grading	16.56	12.36	0.79	0.59
Final Grading	16.56	12.36	**0.98**	0.61
Low Water Crossing Construction	7.56	9.18	0.40	0.30
Reservoir Coating-2024	**16.71**	**23.54**	**0.75**	**0.72**
Reservoir Coating-2025	15.30	23.46	0.65	0.62
Maximum	**16.71**	**23.54**	**0.98**	**0.72**
Exceeds Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

As shown in **Table D**, emissions from construction of the Project will be below the LST established by the SCAQMD for the Project.

The Project involves the restoration of the permanent access road to the District's Rice Canyon Reservoir and rehabilitation of the existing reservoir. The long-term emissions from the Project, as discussed previously, are primarily in the form of mobile source emissions, with no new or existing stationary sources of emissions present. According to the LST methodology, LSTs only apply to the operational phase if a project includes stationary sources or on-site mobile equipment generating on-site emissions. The proposed Project does not include such uses. Therefore, no long-term LST analysis is needed.

Based on the discussion above, the Project will not result in localized criteria pollutant impacts during construction or operation. Therefore, the Project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and impacts will be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3d. **Less than significant impact.** The Project presents the potential for generation of odors in the form of diesel exhaust during construction in the immediate vicinity of the Project site. Odors generated during construction would be short-term and would be localized; thus, construction of the Project would not result in the long-term creation of other emissions or odors. Similarly, only infrequent maintenance of the proposed infrastructure will be required in which any potential odors would disperse quickly and cease after maintenance activities are completed. Recognizing the short-term duration and quantity of emissions in the proposed Project area, impacts with regard to other emissions such as odors affecting a substantial number of people are less than significant.

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5.4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 a 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: CADRE, SE-A, SE-B, SE-C, SE-D, OSPREY, WEBB-A

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

The analysis in this section is based on the findings in the following studies;

- *Biological Resources Assessment and MSHCP Consistency Analysis*, December 2022 (hereinafter the MSHCP Consistency Analysis), cited as SE-A, prepared by South Environmental, included as Appendix B.1;
- *Burrowing Owl Survey Report for the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project*, August 2022 (hereinafter the Burrowing Owl Survey Report), cited as SE-B, prepared by South Environmental, included as Appendix B.2;

- *Botanical Survey Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project*, August 2022 (hereinafter Botanical Survey), cited as SE-C, prepared by South Environmental included as Appendix B.3;

- *Jurisdictional Delineation for Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project in Lake Elsinore*, May 10, 2022, (hereafter referred to as the JD Report) cited as SE-D, prepared by South Environmental included as Appendix B.4;

- *Coastal California Gnatcatcher United States Fish and Wildlife Service Focused Surveys for the 2.60 Acre Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site*, April 2022 (hereinafter the Coastal California Gnatcatcher Focused Survey), cited as CADRE, prepared by Cadre Environmental, included as Appendix B.5;

- *2022 Focused Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Survey Report for the Proposed Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road Project*, June 2022 (hereinafter the Focused Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Survey), cited as OSPREY, prepared by Osprey Environmental Associates, included as Appendix B.6 and;

- *EVMWD Rice Canyon Replacement Land Equivalency Report,* October 5, 2022 (hereinafter Equivalency Report), cited as WEBB-A, prepared by Albert A. Webb Associates, included as Appendix B.7

The Project site is located within the boundary of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP); however, EVMWD is not a Permittee nor a Participating Special Entity (PSE).

The preparers of the aforementioned reports conducted literature reviews and searches of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, Soil Survey data, vegetation mapping, National Wetlands Inventory, MSHCP GIS data, National Hydrography Data set, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), California Protected Areas Database, and the Critical Habitat portal. Historic aerial photographs and soils maps from the United States Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Services were also reviewed. In addition to the literature review and database searches, pedestrian surveys were conducted of the Project Site and surrounding area.

4a. **Less than significant with mitigation.** According to the MSHCP Consistency Analysis, the Project site contains five plant communities and one land cover type: Chaparral, Coast Live Oak Woodland, Disturbed/Developed, Riparian Forest, Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub, and Riversidean Sage Scrub as shown in **Table E – Summary of Plant Communities in the Study Area**, below. The Project footprint plus a 300-foot-wide buffer was surveyed for biological resources on February 5, 2022, collectively referred to as the Biological Study Area (BSA). (SE-A, p. 5) Five additional pedestrian surveys took place during February 2022 to July 2022 in the BSA. (SE-A, p. 22)

The Project would be constructed on disturbed or developed areas where an existing access road occurs (1.10-acres, or 43% of the Project site) and the remaining impacts would occur to areas of native plant communities at the edge of the existing road. (SE-A, p. iii)

Figure 9– Plant Communities and Special Status Plant Locations[5] illustrates the different plant communities in relation to the proposed access road alignment, as well proposed plant species removal.

Table E – Summary of Plant Communities in the Study Area

Community or Cover Type	Total Survey Area (acres)	Project Site (acres)
Chaparral	9.37	0.15
Coast Live Oak Woodland	8.11	0.43
Disturbed/Developed	4.73	1.10
Riparian Forest	1.28	0.19
Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub	3.55	0.08
Riversidean Sage Scrub	18.03	0.61
Total	**45.07**	**2.56**

Source: SE-A, p.iii.

The plant communities listed in **Table E**, have the potential to support special-status species. Potential impacts to special-status species are discussed below. Additionally, Riparian Forest and Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub plant communities are considered sensitive natural communities by the CDFW. (SE-A, pp. iii-iv) Potential impacts to sensitive natural communities are discussed in *Threshold 4b*.

The Project site has several host plants that are used by Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), which is a state species of concern. Because plants from genera Antirrhinum, Phacelia, Clarkia, Dendromecon, Eschscholzia, and Eriogonum are present in the BSA, there is potential for the Crotch's bumble bee to occur in the BSA (SE-A, p. 15). However, South Environmental conducted numerous surveys of the Project impact areas, and hives or nesting colonies of the species were not observed (SE-A, p. 36). Furthermore, if the Crotch's bumble bee did occur on the Project site, it would not likely be impacted directly by construction as it can simply fly away to adjacent habitat when faced with construction disturbances. The host food plants in the BSA were mostly outside the Project footprint and the loss of these plants would be negligible as it would amount to a few individual shrubs. (SE-A, p. 36) Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is proposed for this species.

The Project Site contains suitable nesting habitat for bird species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), and white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*) are special-status birds with the potential to nest on the site (SE-A. p. v). Cooper's hawk and white-tailed kite have been observed in the immediate area of the Project (SE-A, pp. 61, 64). Impacts to nesting birds, both direct and indirect, can be minimized or eliminated during Project-related activities by conducting work outside of the breeding season. Although nesting can occur year-round in Southern California for some species, the typical avian breeding season is from approximately February 1 through August 31. To reduce impacts to nesting birds, the Project shall implement mitigation measure **MM BIO-1**, which requires preconstruction nesting bird surveys prior to any Project-related ground disturbing activities between September 1st and January 31st.

[5] Figure will commence at the end of this section, on page 44.

MM BIO-1: Nesting bird survey.
Ground-disturbing activities and vegetation removal should be timed to occur between September 1 – January 31, which is outside the bird and raptor nesting season. If ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal (including tree trimming) are scheduled between February 1 – August 31, which is the bird nesting season, then a preconstruction survey for nesting birds shall be conducted within 72 hours prior to construction activities. The survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist with prior experience conducting nesting bird surveys for construction projects. The study area should include the affected area and suitable habitat within a 500-foot buffer, or a buffer size determined by the qualified biologist based on level of proposed disturbance and access. Results of the survey shall be provided to EVMWD. If no active nests are found, no additional measures are required.

If active nests are found, then the biologist will map the location and document the species and nesting stage for EVMWD. A no-work buffer will be established around the active nest as determined by the qualified biologist and based on the species sensitivity to disturbance and the type and duration of the disturbance. No construction activities shall occur within the no-work buffer until the biologist has determined the nest is no longer active.

The BSA is not within any designated or proposed USFWS Critical Habitat units for any plant or animal species. (SE-A, p. 15) According to the literature analysis of the CNDDB, CNPS, and IPaC databases for special status species, 135 species have the potential to inhabit the Project site. This includes rare, threatened, endangered species at a federal and state level and California Rare Plant Rating (CRPR) species with classifications ranging from one to four. The CRPR's are assigned by the CDFW to plant species that have conservation challenges often with a limited distribution, or which have the potential for conservation problems in the future. Of the 135 species, 75 are plant species and 60 are animal species. Because EVMWD is not a Permittee to the MSHCP nor a PSE, protocol surveys were conducted for the following special species based on potentially suitable habitat being present in the BSA: the federally listed endangered Quino Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas Editha quino*), federally threatened/state species of special concern coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), and state species of special concern burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). In addition, a botanical survey was done for listed species, including MSHCP Area Plan, Narrow Endemic, and Criteria Area plant species.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (Polioptila californica californica)

Suitable habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher occurs within the Project site on the following plant communities; Riversidean sage scrub and ecotones with southern mixed chaparral (CADRE, p. 2). Cadre established a Study Area for gnatcatcher habitat of 16.85-acre within and adjacent to the Project site (CADRE, p. 1). CADRE conducted six focused surveys in all areas of suitable habitat with at least seven days between site visits during the breeding season from March 2022 through April 2022. Surveys were conducted in accordance with the 1997 USFWS coastal California gnatcatcher guidelines. The surveys were conducted on foot using taped vocalization and "pishing" sounds to identify and call. (CADRE, p. 3) Surveys were not conducted in extreme weather conditions. (CADRE, p. 3) No coastal California gnatcatcher species were documented within the Survey Area during the spring 2022 focused surveys. (CADRE, p. 4.)

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

According to the Focused Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Survey, the Project footprint plus a 50-foot-wide buffer ("Study Area") was surveyed according to the USFWS 2014 *Quino Checkerspot Survey Guidelines* by a Quino-permitted biologist. First, host plant mapping and a site assessment were conducted on February 19, 2022 prior to the focused surveys to locate any of the seven Quino host plants: dotseed plantain (*Plantago erecta*), exserted Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja exserta*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), Coulter's snapdragon (*Antirrhinum coulterianum*), stiffbranch bird's beak (*Cordylanthus rigidus*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia concolor*), and purple Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) (OSPREY, p. 2). No Quino host plants were observed in the Study Area; however, 25 plant species were observed in bloom as potential nectar sources for Quino.

A total of 12 focused Quino surveys were conducted of the Study Area between February 26, 2022 and May 13, 2022. Focused surveys were conducted on foot during weather conditions that were conducive for species detection. No Quino was observed during the 2022 focused survey effort; however, a total of 11 butterfly species were identified during the surveys, including:

- Acmon blue (*Plebejus acmon*)
- checkered white *(Pontia protodice*)
- western tiger swallowtail *(Papilio rutulus)*
- Sara orangetip (*Anthocharis sara sara*)
- cabbage white *(Pieris rapae)*
- bramble (perplexing) hairstreak *(C. dumetorum affinis)*
- common buckeye *(Junonia coenia grisea)*
- mournful duskywing *(Erynnis tristis)*
- southern blue *(Glaucopsyche lygdamus australis)*
- monarch *(Danaus plexippus)*
- pale swallowtail (*Papilio eurymedo*n)

Burrowing Owl

According to the Burrowing Owl Survey Report, there is potential for burrowing owls to inhabit burrows in the streambed areas (refer to the Burrowing Owl Survey Report, attached in Appendix B.2 of this Initial Study). South Environmental conducted a burrowing owl habitat assessment and four focused surveys according to CDFW's "2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation" methodology within suitable habitat within a 500-foot buffer (study area) of the Project site. (SE-B, p. 10) A 500-foot buffer was established due to the linear nature of the Project site and the steep walls of the canyon to the north and south that did not have suitable topography for burrowing owls and therefore did not require surveys. (SE-B, p. 10)

The four focused surveys were performed from February 2022 through July 2022 by walking along the entirety if the potential habitat (streambed) in a manner that allowed for complete visual coverage of all potential habitat areas and cover sites.

After completion of the focused surveys, it was determined that the majority of the Study area lacks habitat for burrowing owls because it is too steep or have vegetation that is too dense. The steep walled canyons surrounding the stream are not suitable because burrowing owls use relatively flat areas for burrowing and foraging. Furthermore, the dense, tall vegetation in the woodlands and in the chaparral and sage scrub areas was unsuitable for burrowing owls due to the lack of open areas where owls could forage and the lack of burrows. The density of

vegetation in these areas precludes burrowing owls from using them and the lack of burrows. (SE, p. 11.)

Nonetheless, the Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub habitat along the streambed is spare with occasional boulder piles, which provides crevices and cavities that could be used by burrowing owls. The streambed also has very low-density shrubs and high visibility, which burrowing owls prefer, but it lacks a prey base such as California ground squirrel which were not observed there in abundance. While the flat topography, sparser plant distribution and piles of boulder is present, due to the lack of prey, potential for burrowing owls is limited. Thus, during the focused surveys no sightings of burrowing owls or observance of potential burrows were detected and no signs of owl presence was found. Therefore, it was determined that no burrowing owls are inhabiting Rice Canyon and thus no burrowing owls will be impacted as a result of Project implementation. (SE-B) Despite the lack of quality habitat and low potential for burrowing owls to occur, mitigation measure **MM BIO-2** below, requires a pre-construction survey to occur to ensure no owls are impacted by the Project. (SE-A, p. 24)

> **MM BIO-2: Preconstruction Surveys for Burrowing Owls.**
> Preconstruction surveys for burrowing owls shall be completed by a qualified biologist within suitable habitat on the project site no more than 14-days prior to construction activities and in accordance with the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. If burrowing owls are observed during the preconstruction survey, a specific mitigation methodology for the owls shall be determined in coordination with CDFW to avoid or reduce the impacts to a level that is less than significant. Mitigation could include avoidance of burrows during the nesting season and/or passive relocation of burrowing owls. If no burrowing owls are observed during the pre-construction survey, then construction may proceed.

Botanical Survey

In order to capture the blooming period for all potential special status annual plants on the Project site, South Environmental surveyed the BSA on five dates spread out from early February 2022 to mid-July 2022. (SE-C, p. 1) Prior to the pedestrian surveys, South Environmental reviewed the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) MSHCP Information map, which determined a total of 18 potential narrow endemic, criteria, and area plan plant species within the Project site, as listed in Table 1 of Appendix B.3, herein (SE-C, p. 7).

A total of 84 plant species were identified during the surveys; 67 are native to the California region and 17 are non-native. The habitat of the species consisted of trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, and vines. Non-native species were primarily annual herbs. (SE-C, p. 9) The surveys concluded that no narrow endemic, criteria, or area plan species were observed onsite. Additionally, no rare, threatened, or endangered species at a State of California or federal level were observed. (SE- C, p. 12.)

However, two special status species were observed: Coulter's matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) and Cleveland monkeyflower (*Diplacus clevelandii*). Coulter's matilija poppy and Cleveland monkeyflower are CRPR 4.2 species ("watchlist") and are also included in the list of 146 conservation species, "Covered Species" that are targeted by the MSHCP for conservation at the regional level. (SE-C, p. 9) A total of 54 Coulter's matilija poppy were observed in the BSA; of those, 24 Coulter's matilija poppy would be removed by the Project. Coulter's matilija poppy is

not a rare, threatened, or endangered species at a State of California or federal level. (SE-C, p. 12) Furthermore, according to the RCA, Coulter's matilija poppy is considered "adequately conserved" as of January 21, 2022. One Cleveland monkeyflower was also observed in the BSA; however, it is outside of the Project footprint and will not be impacted by the Project. (SE-C, p. 12.)

Reptiles

Within the BSA the following special-status species have potential to occur in the scrub and chaparral habitats as well as within the streambed; California glossy snake (*Arizona elegans occidentalis*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*) (SE-A, p. v). All three of these reptile species have been observed in the immediate area of the Project (SE-A, pp. 69-70). Both the California glossy snake and coast horned lizard have been identified as CDFW species of special concern, the orange-throated whiptail has been identified as a CDFW watchlist species (SE-A, p. 16) Furthermore, these special-status reptiles have potential to sun themselves in the dirt access road. Therefore, removal of vegetation and ground disturbance from road grading could potentially result in the trampling and death or injury to the reptiles (SE-A, p. 36). Additionally, noise and vibrations could push lizards from their burrows, exposing them and risking being trampled. Vegetation removal and weed whacking could potentially pose a threat to the special-status reptiles. (SE-A, p. 36) Thus, to avoid or reduce potential impacts to the special-status reptiles, compliance with mitigation measure **MM BIO-3** would be required. With **MM BIO-3**, preconstruction surveys will identify the need for protection and relocation of special status reptiles.

Because suitable habitat for special-status species exists in the BSA, mitigation measure **MM BIO-4** will require a qualified Biological Monitor to monitor and provide a Worker's Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) to ensure species are not present and impacted by the Project. In the event that special-status species are found by the Biological Monitor who determines they need to be removed, then **MM BIO-4** would reduce impacts to species being relocated. Compliance with mitigation measures **MM BIO-3** and **MM BIO-4** below would reduce impacts to special status species during construction.

> **MM BIO-3: Special-Status Reptile Survey and Protection/Relocation.** A qualified biologist shall conduct daily reptile biological monitoring during any activities involving vegetation clearing or modification of natural habitat. Initial removal of vegetation shall occur using hand tools only and then can be graded. Vegetation shall be cut with hand tools (e.g., chainsaw, loppers, etc.) at the soil surface, and cut vegetation shall be removed (carried out or placed on a truck). During the vegetation removal, a qualified biologist shall be onsite to recover any individual special-status wildlife that may be excavated or displaced with native vegetation. Positive detections of special-status reptiles (specifically, coast horned lizard, orange-throated whiptail, and California glossy snake) and suitable habitat at the detection location shall be mapped and photographed. Reptile monitoring may be concurrent with general monitoring in **MM BIO-2**. Individual lizards will be captured (if possible) and removed from the impact area and will be released into a predetermined area outside of construction and fuel modification in the immediate vicinity. Following the initial vegetation removal and salvage program the area can be graded and no further reptile monitoring is required.

MM BIO-4: On-Site Biological Monitor and WEAT
Prior to the start of any ground-disturbing activities the District shall hire and retain a qualified biological monitor that shall be onsite during all project activities that require vegetation removal as well as initial ground disturbing impacts. Project activities that occur inside the developed water tank area do not require monitoring. At the start of Project construction, the biological monitor shall deliver a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) to all personnel that works on the project site. The Project contractor shall schedule a training for all personnel that shall include information for all of the potential protected species that could be encountered and should inform the personnel of how to avoid impacts to protected resources and when to report to the biological monitor. The monitor shall keep a log of daily activities and ensure the Project compliance with the recommendations outlined in the permits and project approvals. A copy of the Project permits should be always kept onsite by the biological monitor and available for reference.

The results of the aforementioned surveys indicate some special-status species are present in the Project area and there is potential for other species to occur in the area. However, with implementation of **MM BIO-1**, **MM BIO-2**, **MM BIO-3,** and **MM BIO-4,** the proposed Project will not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any potential species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species. Thus, impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

4b. **Less than significant with mitigation.** According to the MSHCP Consistency Report, riparian/riverine habitat is present on the Project site. (SE-A, p. 25) Of the 2.56-acre Project footprint impact area, roughly one-acre of the vegetation habitat is considered Riparian/Riverine. The one-acre of Riverine/Riparian resources is composed of: riparian forest, Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub, Coast Live Oak Woodland, and Riversidean Sage Scrub habitats (SE-A, p. 34).

Within the Project footprint there are two riparian plants communities that are considered sensitive natural communities by the CDFW; Riparian Forest and Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub. (SE-A, p. 17) The dominant species in the Riparian Forest was Western Sycamore – Coast Live Oak Riparian Woodland which was classified with a CNPS rarity rank at the global and state level of "3". The dominant species in the Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub was Scale Broom Scrub which was classified with a CNPS rarity rank at the global and state level of "3". (SE-A, p. 17) Implementation of the Project would have a very low impact to the existing shrubs in the Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub plant community due to very spare vegetation that is scoured by heavy and annual flows (SE-A, p. 34). Riparian Forest might be impacted in the understory and it is unlikely that any trees would be removed by the Project (SE-A, p. 4) However, the majority of the Project site is mostly disturbed/developed with the existing access road, and currently lacks habitat, therefore anticipated impacts within the Project footprint would be to shrubs and ground cover along the road shoulder.

One existing jurisdictional resource, an ephemeral stream (Rice Canyon Creek), occurs within the Project footprint, which covers a total of 2,665-linear feet of the BSA, as shown on **Figure 10 – Jurisdictional Features**. The ephemeral stream crosses the Project impact area in three locations. The Project is located within the Santa Ana Watershed and within the Dawson Canyon-Temescal Wash sub-watershed. (SE-D, p. 15) There is also associated riparian areas surrounding the creek. The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) shows the creek as a blueline

stream and NWI classifies the creek as an R4SBC, which is a riverine system, intermittent streambed class that has a seasonally flooded water regime. This indicates a water body along a channel that only holds water during certain times of the year. (SE-D, p. 13)

The proposed permanent impacts to Rice Canyon Creek would occur to 0.3-acre of ephemeral stream and 0.7-acre of associated streambed and riparian areas from the installation of concrete low-water crossings in the streambed and widening of the access road in riparian areas. Because the Project will impact riparian habitat, mitigation measure **MM BIO-5** will be required to reduce potential impacts related to riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities.

> **MM BIO-5: Permit Compliance for Impacts to Jurisdictional Features.** EVMWD shall obtain regulatory permits for impacts to jurisdictional features prior to ground disturbance. The following regulatory permits are required: 1.) CDFW Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration via the online portal, 2.) RWQCB Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State notice of intent, and 3.) a USACE application. Permit conditions shall be followed to compensate or mitigate for the impacts, and to avoid impacts to the remaining features during construction and operation of the development. Mitigation may include replacement habitat through conservation easements, habitat restoration, or enhancements at a ratio of 3:1 or as agreed upon during the permitting process. Replacement lands should be acquired immediately adjacent to the Project site or within Rice Canyon or surrounding areas, and preserved in perpetuity as one contiguous parcel, if possible. If additional acres are not available for purchase that support suitable replacement habitats, it is recommended that replacement lands be acquired that extend the Rice Canyon protected areas and enhance wildlife habitat, corridors, and diversity.
>
> Replacement lands shall be protected in perpetuity under a conservation easement dedicated to a local land conservancy or other appropriate entity that has been approved to hold and manage mitigation lands pursuant to Assembly Bill 1094 (2012). Assembly Bill 1094 amended Government Code sections 65965-65968. Under Government Code section 65967, the lead agency must exercise due diligence in reviewing the qualifications of a governmental entity, special district, or nonprofit organization to effectively manage and steward land, water, or natural resources on mitigation lands it approves. An appropriate non-wasting endowment should be provided for the long-term management of mitigation lands.
>
> A plan should be prepared that includes measures to protect the targeted habitat values in perpetuity from direct and indirect negative impacts. Issues that should be addressed include, but are not limited to, restrictions on access, proposed land dedications, control of illegal dumping, water pollution, and increased human intrusion. A conservation easement and endowment funds should be fully acquired, established, transferred, or otherwise executed prior to ground disturbing activities.
>
> If suitable lands are not identified, then conservation and credits from a nearby conservation or mitigation bank should be purchased that would conserve similar habitats to those that are impacted by Project implementation.

As stated in **MM BIO-5**, replacement for the loss of approximately 1-acre of jurisdictional areas that contain riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities may include replacing habitat through conservation easements, habitat restoration, or enhancements at 3:1 or at the ratio determined with the regulatory agencies during the permitting process for impacts to jurisdictional areas. (SE-A, pp. 39-40) Through compliance with **MM BIO-5**, the Project will reduce impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities to a less than significant level.

4c. Less than significant with mitigation. As explained above in *Threshold 4b*, Rice Canyon Creek occurs within the Project BSA and Project footprint, which is a riparian/riverine resource and potentially jurisdictional. (SE-D, p. 18) However, based on the investigations conducted as part of the JD Report, there was no evidence of wetlands in the BSA (SE-D, p. 16). Additionally, no vernal pools were detected in the BSA (SE-A, p. 25). Although no wetlands were identified in the Project area, this analysis will extend to non-wetland features that may be state or federally protected.

Currently, there is approximately 1,500 square feet of concrete low-water crossings within the creek. These will be replaced with 9,036 square feet (0.2-acre) of concrete low-water crossings. According to the JD Report, the Project will permanently impact approximately 1-acre of potentially jurisdictional features. This total includes 0.3-acre (413 linear feet) of non-wetland waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) within the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) of Rice Canyon Creek and 0.3-acre (413 linear feet) of California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et al resources under CDFW jurisdiction. An additional 0.7-acre (1,560 linear feet) of permanent impact to the bank of Rice Canyon Creek (between the OHWM and the top-of-bank) and associated riparian habitat that is under the jurisdiction of CDFW would occur as a result of the Project. (SE-A, p. 37)

With implementation of aforementioned mitigation measure **MM BIO-5** listed in *Threshold 4b*, above, regulatory permits will be required and as part of the permitting process, mitigation will be negotiated with each of the regulatory agencies to their satisfaction in order to offset impacts to Waters of the U.S., 1600 resources, and/or Waters of the State. Mitigation could include purchasing credits from a USACE-approved mitigation bank, conserving and/or enhancing similar or more valuable habitat, or performing habitat improvements in the Rice Canyon Creek outside of the Project limits. Therefore, with implementation of mitigation measure **MM BIO-5**, impacts to state or federally protected wetlands or non-wetlands would be reduced to less than significant.

4d. Less than significant with mitigation. The Project area is located in a canyon at the base of the Cleveland National Forest in the Santa Ana Mountains and is considered a habitat linkage area which is needed for wildlife movement. Specifically, the Project site is within MSHCP Alberhill Subunit of the Elsinore Plan, within Criteria Cells 4250 and 4251 (SE-A, p. 19). Both Criteria Cells 4250 and 4251 contribute to the assembly of Proposed Linkage 1, described as the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains just west of Lee Lake. Criteria Cell 4250 focuses on the conservation of chaparral, and Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub habitat. Criteria Cell 4251 focuses on the conservation of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub habitat. (SE-A, p. 19)

The Project consists of improvements to an existing access road located at-grade, and the proposed design will not construct elements that would interfere with species utilizing the canyon as a wildlife corridor. Implementation of the Project would have a very low impact on Riparian/Riverine plant communities, as it would result in the loss of a few existing shrubs along the road shoulder. Moreover, the low water crossings will be located in the unvegetated river channel. Since wildlife movement is intended to occur in the Project area, the Project construction will be short term and require some lighting for security. Therefore, in order to lessen impacts to wildlife movement, temporary nighttime lighting will be controlled as outlined in **MM AES-1**, above. Furthermore, the Project does not propose any permanent lighting or fencing/walls that would deter or interfere with the passing of wildlife. Additionally, the low water crossings would be designed at grade as to not inhibit or redirect the stream flow or create any barriers (SE-A, p. 38.). Therefore, upon construction completion the Project would be designed in a manner that would not deter or interfere with the movement of wildlife.

While there are no protected trees on the Project site, the Project site would require potential removal of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants that could provide potential nesting habitat for migratory birds and raptors protected by the MBTA, MBPA and the Fish and Game Code. (SE- A, pp. 35,38) Therefore, as stated in *Threshold 4a*, the proposed Project has the potential to impact active migratory bird nests if vegetation and trees are removed during the nesting season. Any activities that occur during the nesting/breeding season of migratory birds protected by the MBTA could result in a potentially significant impact if requirements of the MBTA are not followed. (SE-A, p. 35) Implementation of aforementioned mitigation measure **MM BIO-1** would ensure MBTA compliance and require a nesting bird survey to be conducted prior to the commencement of construction during nesting season, which would reduce potential impacts related to nesting migratory avian species to a less than significant level.

Therefore, through implementation of Project design and mitigation measures, **MM BIO-1** and **MM AES-1**, the Project would reduce potential impacts to the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridor, or impede the use of native wildlife nursey sites to less than significant and no additional mitigation is necessary.

4e. **Less than significant impact.** As shown in **Table E** above in *Threshold 4a* and **Figure 9 – Plant Communities and Special Status Plant Locations**, the BSA includes vegetation communities containing tree species, including Fremont cottonwood, western California sycamore, coast live oak, California scrub oak, and Gooding's willow. The City of Lake Elsinore does not have an ordinance protecting trees in the City. The Riverside County "Code of Ordinances" protects native trees on private and public property that are at an elevation of more than 5,000-feet and are "at least thirty (30) feet and are not less than 12 inches in diameter when measured four and one-half feet above the ground." (SE-A, p. 17) The Project is not at an elevation greater than 5,000 feet. Therefore, there are policies or ordinances protecting biological resources that are applicable to the Project and impacts are less than significant.

4f. **Less than significant impact.** The Project site is located within the Elsinore Area Plan area of the Western Riverside MSHCP and Criteria Cells 4250 and 4251 but is not within a Cell Group. (SE-A, p. 5) The District access road, conduit, and water pipeline are partially located on land that the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) unknowingly accepted ownership not knowing that these facilities were there and require constant access and potential disturbance/maintenance. Upon acceptance of these lands by the RCA, the area became part of

the MSHCP. The areas surrounding the Project site to the north, south, and west are RCA Reserve Lands containing undeveloped native habitats except for the existing reservoir at the west end of the Project site. (WEBB-A, p. 4) EVMWD and RCA have negotiated a process to remove the EVMWD access road and underground facilities from the Reserve Lands and compensate the "loss" by EVMWD giving RCA 2.60-acres of superior habitat. Although EVMWD is not a Permittee to the MSHCP, nor a PSE, consistency with the MSHCP is analyzed below.

Consistency with MSHCP Section 6.1.2 (Protection of Species Associated with Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools)

Volume I, Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP requires that projects develop avoidance alternatives, if feasible, that would allow for full or partial avoidance of riparian/riverine areas. Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP defines Riparian/Riverine areas as "lands which contain Habitat dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergent, or emergent mosses and lichens, which occur close to, or which depend upon soil moisture from a nearby fresh water source; or areas with fresh water flow during all or a portion of the year." As discussed in *Threshold 4b*, the Project's BSA supports riparian/riverine habitats, however through implementation of mitigation measures **MM BIO-3**, **MM BIO-4** and **MM BIO-5** impacts related to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community will be reduced to less than significant. (SE-A, pp. 24-26) Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP.

Consistency with MSHCP Section 6.1.3 (Protection of Narrow Endemic Plant Species)

Volume I, Section 6.1.3 of the MSHCP requires that within identified Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Areas (NEPSSA), site-specific focused surveys for Narrow Endemic Plants Species will be required for all public and private projects where appropriate soils and habitat are present. The Project site is located within a predetermined survey area for MSHCP narrow endemic plant species. According to the Botanical Survey, no NEPSSA species were observed in the BSA. Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with MSHCP Section 6.1.3.

Consistency with MSHCP Section 6.1.4 (Guidelines Pertaining to the Urban/Wildlife Interface)

Section 6.1.4 outlines the minimization of indirect effects associated with locating development in proximity to a MSHCP Conservation Area. The proposed Project is surrounded by MSHCP Conserved Lands. However, the Project is a minor expansion of an existing access road that leads to an existing and necessary water facility. The road does not increase potential for future development as it is a maintenance road, and only a continuation of the existing use is the intended future use. Because the habitats on the Project site have potential for special-status species, implementation of mitigation measures **MM BIO-5,** and **MM AES-1**, as well as standard BMPs for construction activities, the Project will be consistent with Section 6.1.4 of the MSHCP.

Consistency with MSHCP Section 6.3.2 (Additional Survey Needs and Procedures)

The MSHCP requires additional surveys for certain species if a project or its off-site impact area are located within criteria areas shown on Figure 6-2 (Criteria Area Species Survey Area), Figure 6-3 (Amphibian Species Survey Areas with Critical Area), Figure 6-4 (Burrowing Owl Survey Areas with Criteria Area) and Figure 6-5 (Mammal Species Survey Areas with Criteria Area) of the MSHCP.

The Project site does not occur within any Amphibian Species Survey Area or Mammal Species Survey Area as identified by the MSHCP. (SE-A, p. 21)

The Project site is located within the MSHCP Criteria Area Species. Per the MSHCP, the Project site is located in the 6.3.2 survey area for burrowing owl Protocol surveys were conducted for burrowing owls, which were absent from the site. (SE-A, p. 15) No other 6.3.2 species occur within the Project footprint. Thus, the Project does not conflict with Section 6.3.2 of the MSHCP.

The Project is not within the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Fee Area nor within conserved lands for this species. Furthermore, there are no other applicable HCP's or NCCP's or other approved habitat conservation plans. For the reasons explained above, implementation of the proposed Project will not conflict with the provisions of an adopted conservation plan and impacts will be less than significant.

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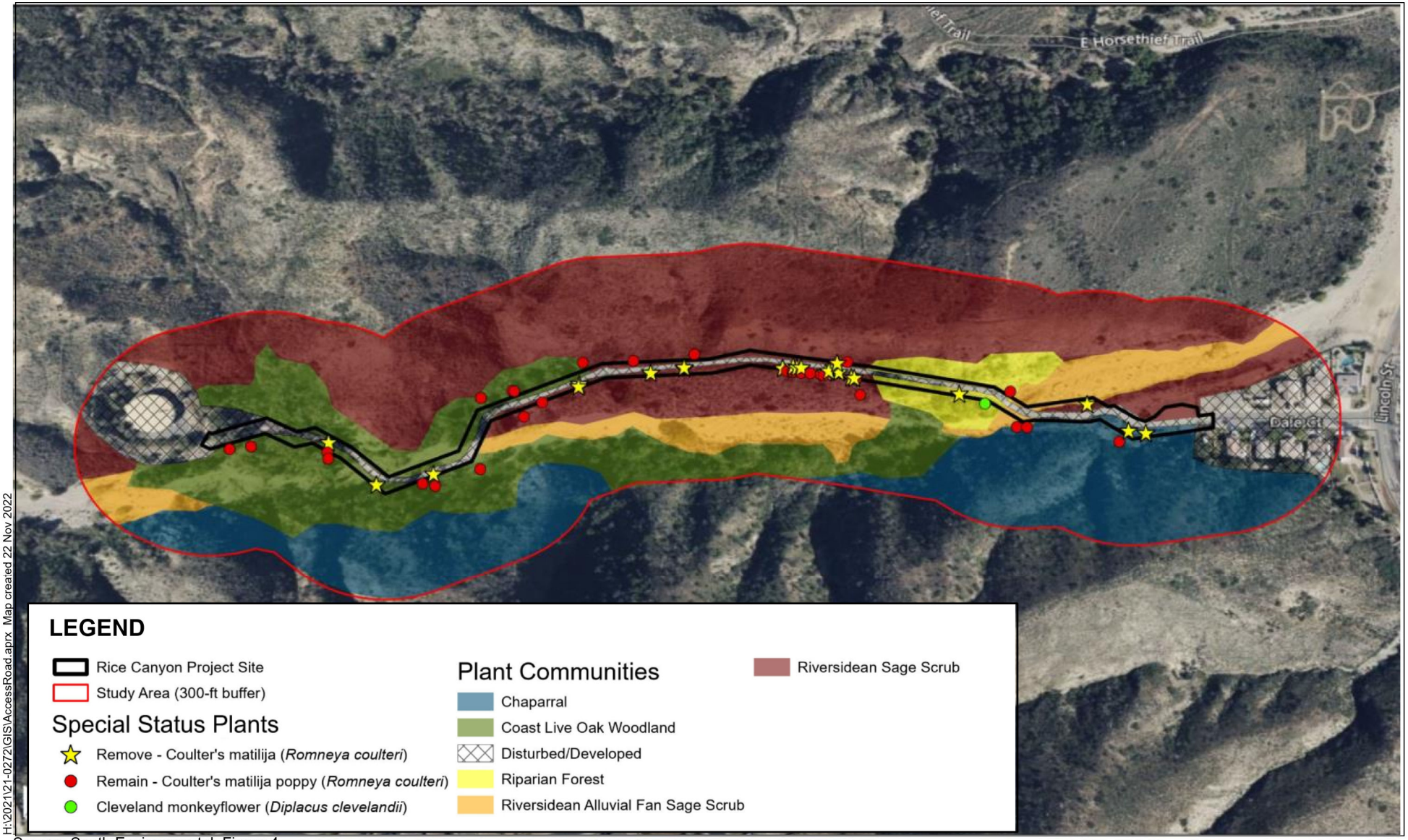

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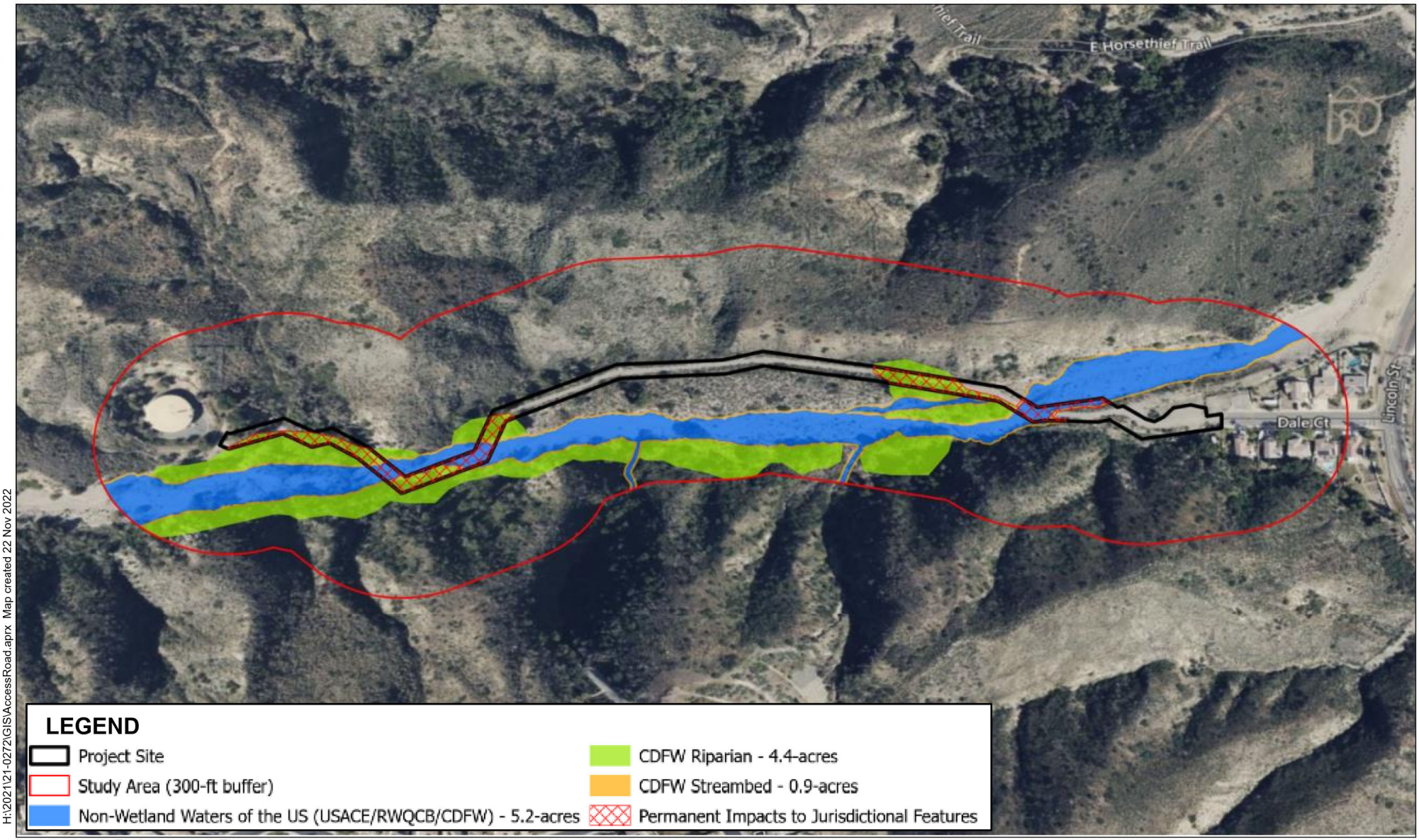
Source: South Environmental, Figure 4.

Figure 9 – Plant Communities and Special Status Plant Locations

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

Not to Scale

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



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Source: South Environmental, Figure 6.

Figure 10 – Jurisdictional Features

Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road and New Conduit Project

Not to Scale

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

References: SE-E

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

5a. **No impact.** To determine the impacts to historical resources South Environmental (SE), prepared a *Cultural Resources Technical Report* dated September 2022 included as Appendix C of this IS and cited as SE-E. As part of the survey, a records search was conducted by SE at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) on March 17, 2022. SE also reviewed additional sources including: the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Index, the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), the list of California State Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest and the Archeological Determinations of Eligibility. (SE-E, p. 17) The records search included collections of mapped prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and historic built-environment resources, within the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) and a one-mile radius. (SE-E, p. 17)

According to the EIC records search results, two previously conducted cultural resource studies (RI-03323 and RI-03328) overlap the Project's APE. An additional 19 studies were identified outside the Project site, but within the one-mile records search radius. (SE-E, p. 17) No previously recorded cultural resources overlap the Project APE. Within the one-mile records search radius 14 previously recorded cultural resources were identified. Of these, eight are prehistoric lithic scatter, one is a prehistoric isolate, one is a historic era refuse scatter, and four are historic era built environment resources. (SE-E, p. 20)

A pedestrian survey was conducted by SE and a Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians Cultural Monitor (Mr. Santee Marruffo) on April 19, 2022. All accessible portions of the Project site were subject to an intensive-level ground surface pedestrian survey. Steep slopes with dense vegetation primarily along the northside of the 100-foot buffer in the central portion of the Project site were largely inaccessible, making examination of the ground surface impossible in most of these areas. Where gaps in vegetation allowed, areas were spot check. (SE-E, p. 36) All exposed ground was inspected for cultural material such as prehistoric artifacts, historical artifacts, sediment discoloration, depressed and other features indicating presence of structures or buildings. At the time of the survey, the Project site was characterized as having moderate to good ground surface visibility as much of the Project site consists of a dirt road with little vegetation. Additionally, the Rice Canyon stream channel was also within portions of the Project site or 100-foot buffer and generally had low to moderate vegetation density. (SE-E, p. 36) The

plant communities identified were Riversidean sage scrub, chapparal, coast live oak woodlands, Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub and riparian forest. Evidence of past wildfire burns was observed, including partially burned oak trees and patches and patches of dark brown to black sediments. Sediments observed in the proposed Project site primarily ranged from tan-gray silty sand with gravel and cobbles in the stream bed to medium to dark brown silt in flat areas. Paved areas were limited to the asphalt around the reservoir and concrete slabs at the stream crossings. During the pedestrian survey no historical resources were identified within the proposed Project site. (SE-E, pp. 36, 41)

In conclusion, no historical resources were identified within the Project site as a result of the records search results or pedestrian survey by a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor. Therefore, no impacts to historic properties are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

5b. **Less than significant with mitigation.** As discussed in *Threshold 5a* above, a total of 14 cultural resources were recorded within one-mile of the Project area; however, none were recorded inside the Project APE. SE also conducted a search of the California Native American Heritage Commission' s (NAHC) Sacred Lands File with negative results. Since the NAHC does not maintain an exhaustive list of Native American cultural resources, it was recommended that other sources be contacted for additional information. NAHC provided a list of 16 potentially knowledgeable contacts. Native American outreach was conducted with all 16 contacts and no archaeological, historical or tribal cultural resources were identified as a result. (SE-E, p. 21)

As also discussed in *Threshold 5a*, above, the pedestrian survey did not identify any cultural resources. It was noted that significant portions of the Project APE have been previously disturbed by construction of the existing access road and reservoir to the west. Therefore, the Project site is unlikely to contain intact buried archaeological deposits. (SE-E, p. 41) Nonetheless, there is always the potential that previously unidentified archaeological resources may be discovered during ground disturbance. In the unlikely event that an archaeological resource is discovered, mitigation measure **MM CR-1** shall be implemented to reduce impacts related to archaeological resources to a less than significant level.

> **MM CR-1**: Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources. In the event that archaeological resources are exposed during construction activities for the proposed project, all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find shall immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or not additional study is warranted. Depending upon the significance of the find, the archaeologist may simply record the find and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves significant under CEQA or Section 106 of the NHPA, additional work such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, monitoring, testing, or data recovery may be warranted and shall be implemented accordingly. Copies of documentation pertaining to pre-historic finds shall be provided to the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians.

5c. **Less than significant with mitigation.** As discussed in *Threshold 5b* above, the Project site has been previously disturbed by construction of the existing access road and reservoir area to the west, thus it is unlikely to contain intact buried deposits. (SE-E, p. 41) Nonetheless, there is

always the potential for previously unknown resources to be discovered at the site during project construction activities. Mitigation measure **MM CR-2** will be implemented to ensure that any human remains that might be discovered at the site are treated appropriately pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097.98 of the California Public Resources Code (CHSC). With adherence to existing laws and regulations, and implementation of mitigation measure **MM CR-2**, impacts with regard to the disturbance of human remains will be less than significant.

> **MM CR-2**: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains. In the event that human remains (or remains that may be human) are discovered at the Project site, the County Corner shall be notified withing 24 hours of the discovery, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. No further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby areas reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains shall occur until County Coroner has determined, within two working days of notification of the discovery, the appropriate treatment and disposition of the human remains.
>
> If the remains are determined to be Native American, the Coroner shall notify the NAHC in Sacramento within 24 hours. In accordance with California PRC, Section 5097.98, the NAHC must immediately notify those persons it believes to be "Most Likely Descendent" (MLD) from the deceased Native American. The MLD shall complete their inspection within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD would then determine, in consultation with the property owner, the disposition of the human remains.

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5.6 ENERGY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

6a. **Less than significant.** As an infrastructure project, the majority of impacts would be short-term. As described above in *Threshold 3b*, above, the Project's short-term construction would last approximately 14 months. Project construction would require the use of construction equipment during vegetation removal (clear and grub), grading, low water crossing construction and reservoir rehabilitation, as well as construction workers and vendors traveling to and from the Project site. Construction equipment requires diesel as the fuel source and construction worker and vendor trips use both gasoline and diesel fuel.

Fuel consumption from on-site heavy-duty construction equipment and construction would be temporary in nature and uses a limited number of equipment, which would represent a negligible demand on energy resources. Furthermore, there are no unusual Project site characteristics that would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy-efficient than at comparable construction sites in other parts of the state. Similarly, only infrequent maintenance of the proposed infrastructure will be required once construction is complete and would be similar to or less than the vehicle and equipment usage during construction.

For these reasons, the Project would not result in a potentially significant impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during Project construction or operation. Impacts are less than significant. No mitigation is required.

6b. **Less than significant impact.** The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency because there are no applicable plans for infrastructure improvements such as those proposed. Further, the Project does not propose expansion of the existing operations of the Reservoir, only infrequent maintenance of the proposed infrastructure will be required once construction is complete and would be similar to or less than the vehicle and equipment usage during construction. Thus, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No impact would occur.

5.7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 onsite or offsite 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 direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

References: CONVERSE, DOC EHZ, Google Earth, GP, GPEIR, LEMC, RCIT, SE-A, SE-E

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

7a(i). Less than significant impact. A *Geotechnical Investigation Report: Rice Canyon Reservoir Permanent Access Road and New Conduit* dated July 12, 2022 (included as Appendix D), was prepared by Converse Consultants (CONVERSE). Preparation of the *Geotechnical Investigation* included document review, field exploration, and laboratory testing. The results of these efforts

were compiled and evaluated and the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the proposed Project are presented in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report*. (CONVERSE, p. 4)

The Project site is located on the northwestern margin of the Elsinore Trough in the northern Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province of Southern California. The province is a seismically active region characterized by a series of southeast trending strike-slip faults. (CONVERSE, pp. 5–6) (DOC EHZ) The most prominent fault zones within close proximity to the Project site are the Elsinore, San Jacinto, and San Andreas Fault Zones, all of which have been known to be active during Quaternary time. (CONVERSE, pp. 5–6) According to the California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application provided by the Department of Conservation, the proposed Project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (DOC EHZ)

However, the eastern portion of the Project site is located approximately 0.30 miles southwest of the Elsinore Fault Zone, more specifically in the Glen Ivy North Fault section of this zone. (Google Earth) The Elsinore Fault Zone is considered to be active and believed to be capable of generating earthquakes ranging from a 6.5–7.5 moment magnitude scale (Mw), with a recurrence interval of approximately 250 years between major events. (GP, p. 66) Nonetheless, operation of the Project would not assign personnel to the Project site on a daily basis rather on an "as needed" basis for occasional maintenance. Due to the nature of the proposed Project, it does not pose a substantial risk of loss, injury, or death as it does not propose any habitable structures and will be designed and constructed in accordance the current California Building Code (CBC) and will comply with earthwork recommendations and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report).(CONVERSE, p. 8) These geotechnical recommendations shall be included in the contract specifications and incorporated into final design and construction. Therefore, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from the rupture of a known earthquake fault would be less than significant.

7a(ii). Less than significant impact. In addition to the Elsinore and San Jacinto Fault Zones, mentioned above, the San Andreas Fault, approximately 26.8 miles away, can be considered a potential significant source of lower-frequency and longer–duration shaking at the Project site. (DOC EHZ) However, since ground shaking and earthquake activity is typical of the Southern California area, the proposed Project will be designed according to the current CBCs and will comply with earthwork recommendation and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) These geotechnical recommendations shall be included in the contract specifications and incorporated into final design and construction. Therefore, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from strong seismic ground-shaking would be less than significant.

7a(iii). Less than significant impact. For liquefaction to occur, intense seismic shaking, the presence of loose granular soils prone to liquefaction, and the saturation of soils due to shallow groundwater need to occur simultaneously. (GPEIR, p. 3.11-14) According to City of Lake Elsinore General Plan (GP) Figure 3.4 – Liquefaction Susceptibility in Lake Elsinore Area, the Project site lies within an area of low liquefaction potential (GP, p. 3-21, RCIT) Additionally, Figure 3.3 – Seismic Hazards of the City's GP showed that the Project site is located in an area with no groundwater data and moderate to low susceptible sediments to secondary seismic hazards which may include liquefaction or ground failure. (GP, pp. 3-15, 3-19) Thus, the Project would be required to comply with the current CBC and earthwork recommendation and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) These geotechnical recommendations shall be included in the

contract specifications and incorporated into final design and construction. Therefore, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from liquefaction would be less than significant.

7a(iv). Less than significant impact. Landslides and rockfalls can be expected to occur within the City as a result of seismic activity and other natural processes such as saturation during heavy rains or human activity. (GPEIR, p. 3.11-28) As noted in the City's GP a substantial portion of the City is located on slopes of 30 percent or steeper that can potentially cause a significant risk of slope failure. (GP, p. 3-15) Slopes on the Project site range in steepness from 0 to 35 percent. (GP, p. 3-23) The proposed Project would be required to abide by the current CBC and earthwork recommendation and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) These geotechnical recommendations shall be included in the contract specifications and incorporated into final design and construction. Therefore, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from potential landslides would be reduced to less than significant.

7b. Less than significant impact. Construction activities have the potential to result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. However, erosion will be addressed through the implementation of existing State and Federal requirements and minimized through compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general construction permit, which requires a preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that incorporates effective erosion and sediment control measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant. Permit coverage under the statewide Construction General Permit from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and preparation of an effective SWPPP is required because the Project site and anticipated area of disturbance is greater than one-acre. The SWPPP shall incorporate applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce loss of topsoil and prevent substantial soil erosion. However, during construction of the Project shall keep excavated surfaces moist. As stated in the *Geotechnical Investigation*, during periods of rainfall adequate provisions should be made to protect slope excavations. (CONVERSE, p. 18)

The Project proposes to implement the following design measures; earthen drainage swales along the road, two new concrete low-flow crossing (Crossing A + Crossing B and Crossing C) and sloped cut-off walls, which provide erosion prevention. Both the sloped cut-off walls and Crossings increase impervious surfaces to the existing site, which reduce the amount of available top soil. The earthen drainage swales are intended to prevent soil erosion by slowing down and controlling water flow to prevent flooding. Implementation of the Project would result in the reduction of soil erosion from its current state.

As previously mentioned above, the proposed Project will be required to comply with the current CBC and earthwork recommendations and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) These geotechnical recommendations shall be included in the contract specifications and incorporated into final design and construction. Therefore, substantial impacts resulting from soil erosion or the loss of topsoil would be reduced to less than significant.

7c. Less than significant impact. As discussed above in *Threshold 7a(iii)*, the proposed Project site is located in an area that has been determined to have a low potential for liquefaction. (GP, p. 3.21, RCIT) Additionally, as recommended in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report*, during construction all excavations should be conducted in a manner not to cause loss of bearing and/or lateral support. Furthermore, as part of the recommendations, CONVERSE noted that at

the final bottom of all surfaces of all excavations a geotechnical consultant shall observe and approve prior to placing any fill. (CONVERSE, p 12) CONVERSE concluded that it was not possible to estimate the shrinkage and subsidence of the site soils after compaction due to the lack of driven samples. Nonetheless, because the Project site soil contains a large number of particles greater than three inches, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the volume of compactable soil after removing large particles. As part of the *Geotechnical Investigation Report,* field testing is recommended. As previously mentioned above, the proposed Project will be required to comply with earthwork recommendations and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) Therefore, potential impacts of the geologic unit or soil as to become unstable as a result of Project implementation would be less than significant.

7d. **Less than significant impact.** Six Soils occur on the Project site; Cieneba Sandy loam, Hanford coarse sandy loam, Soboba cobbly loamy sand, Tujunga loamy sand, Riverwash and Vista Coarse sandy loam (SE-A, p. 7). All of which are considered to be within a medium-high expansive soil range. The geotechnical investigation recommends that structural footings and slabs-on-grade be uniformly supported by compacted fill. In order to provide uniform support, structural areas should be over excavated, scarified and recompacted. (CONVERSE, pp. 8-9) As previously mentioned above, the proposed Project will be required to comply with earthwork recommendations and design recommendations outlined in the *Geotechnical Investigation Report* (or subsequently updated report). (CONVERSE, p. 8) Therefore, potential impacts from expansive soils would be less than significant.

7e. **No impact.** As previously mentioned, the proposed Project would repair an existing infrastructure at the Rice Canyon Reservoir which does not include any existing sewer systems. Additionally, the proposed Project does not include any existing sewer systems and will not require the use of a septic tank. Therefore, there would be no impacts in this regard.

7f. **Less than significant with mitigation.** As part of the *Cultural Resource Technical Report* prepared by South Environmental on September 2022 (Appendix C), a Paleontological Records Search was conducted on January 20, 2022 by the Western Science Center (WSC). No fossil localities within the Project site or a one-mile radius surrounding the Project site were identified by the records search. (SE-E, p. 27)

Based on WSC's results, the geological unit underlying the Project area is mapped primarily as alluvial fan deposits dating from the Late Pleistocene to Holocene epoch with segments of granitic rock dating to the Cretaceous along the western Project area. Paleontological sensitivity for cretaceous granite is considered low while the Pleistocene alluvial units are considered to be of high paleontological sensitivity. Although the WSC does not have localities within the Project area or a one-mile radius, they do have numerous localities throughout the region in similarly mapped sediments. WSC noted that Southern California Pleistocene units are well known to produce fossils localities and specimens associated with mammoth, mastodon sabertooth cats, ancient horse and other Pleistocene megafauna and microfauna. (SE, pp. 27-28)

Additionally, the Project site is located within a "low" paleontological sensitive area. (GPEIR, p. 3.2-25) While the WSC records search did not identify any fossil localities with the Project area or one-mile radius, it is still plausible to recover fossils during the Project construction activities that would be scientifically significant. Since construction excavation activities could potentially impact paleontologically sensitive Pleistocene units, mitigation measure **MM GEO-1** shall be

implemented to reduce impacts with regard to directly or indirectly destroying a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature to less than significant.

MM GEO-1: **Paleontological Resource Mitigation Plan**. Prior to ground-disturbing activities for the Project, the Project contractor shall have a qualified Paleontologist prepare and implement a paleontological resource mitigation plan for any fossils that may be encountered during ground disturbing activities within the Project site. The paleontological resource mitigation plan shall identify the procedure to monitor, salvage, and curate any recovered fossils associated with the current study area.

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5.8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: CalEEMod, SCAQMD-E, SCAQMD-F

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

8a. **Less than significant impact.** Greenhouse gases (GHG) are evaluated on an annual basis using the metric system. Several agencies, at various levels, have proposed draft GHG significance thresholds for use in CEQA documents. SCAQMD has worked on GHG thresholds for development projects. In December 2008, the SCAQMD adopted a threshold of 10,000 metric tons per year of carbon dioxide equivalents ($MTCO_2E$/yr) for stationary source projects where SCAQMD is the lead agency. (SCAQMD-E) The most recent draft proposal was in September 2010 and included screening significance thresholds for residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects at 3,500, 1,400, and 3,000 $MTCO_2E$/yr, respectively. (SCAQMD-F) Alternatively, a lead agency has the option to use 3,000 $MTCO_2E$/yr as a threshold for all non-industrial projects. Although both options are recommended by SCAQMD, a lead agency is advised to use only one option and to use it consistently. The SCAQMD significance thresholds also recommend amortizing construction emission over an expected project life of 30 years.

The Project's GHG emissions were estimated in CalEEMod and the modeling output is included in Appendix A. Short-term GHG emissions occur during construction resulting from fuel usage by construction equipment and construction-related activities, such as construction worker trips. Since the Project consists of improvements to restore and rehabilitate existing infrastructure, operational GHG emissions would be primarily from the infrequent visits by vehicles and equipment driven and operated by maintenance personnel and would be similar to or less than the short-term emissions estimated; therefore, only short-term impacts were evaluated for the Project.

CalEEMod results indicate that an estimated total of 514.12 $MTCO_2E$ would occur from Project construction equipment over the course of the estimated 14-month construction period, as shown in **Table F – Project Construction Equipment GHG Emissions**. The amortized GHG emissions from Project construction are estimated to be 17.14 $MTCO_2E$/yr.

Table F – Project Construction Equipment GHG Emissions

Year	Metric Tons per year (MT/yr)			
	Total CO_2	Total CH_4	Total N_2O	Total CO_2E
2024	430.85	0.08	0.00	433.58
2025	80.09	0.01	0.00	80.54
Total	**510.94**	**0.19**	**0.00**	**514.12**
			Amortized[1]	**17.14**

Source: CalEEMod (Appendix A)

Notes: [1] Construction emissions were amortized over a 30-year period, as recommended by SCAQMD. The values shown are rounded. CO_2 = carbon dioxide, CH_4 = methane, N_2O = nitrous oxide, CO_2E = carbon dioxide equivalents. CO_2E is the sum of CO_2 emissions estimated plus the sum of CH_4 and N_2O emissions estimated multiplied by their respective global warming potential (GWP).

The proposed Project does not fit into the categories provided (industrial, commercial, and residential) in the draft thresholds from SCAQMD. However, the total GHG emissions are below the SCAQMD recommended screening level of 3,000 $MTCO_2E$/yr. Therefore, the proposed Project will not generate GHG emissions, directly or indirectly, that have a significant effect on the environment. Impacts are less than significant.

8b. **No impact.** Construction and operation of the Project would not generate GHG emissions such that a significant impact on the environment would result. Refer to *Threshold 8a*, above. Further, these facilities would not obstruct implementation of any future plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Therefore, no impact would occur.

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5.9. HAZARDS/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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 two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise or 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: CCR, CEPA, LEUSD

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

9a. **Less than significant impact.** Construction of the Project will involve the transport of fuels, lubricants, and various other liquids for operation of construction equipment. These materials will be transported to the Project site by equipment service trucks. In addition, workers will commute to the Project via private vehicles and will operate construction vehicles and equipment on public streets. The United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety prescribes strict regulations for the safe transport of hazardous materials, as described in Code of Federal Regulations Title 49 and implemented by California Code of Regulations Title 13. Materials that are hazardous to humans and animals will be present during Project construction including diesel fuel, gasoline, equipment fuels, concrete, lubricant oils, and adhesives.

The Project involves the reconstruction of the existing Rice Canyon access road. Therefore, operation of the Project does not include routine transport or disposal of hazard material.

The potential exists for direct impacts to human health and the environment from accidental spills of small amounts of hazardous materials during Project construction through the transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, and solvents. However, a variety of federal, state, and local laws govern the transport, generation, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes. Title 49, parts 171-180 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) implemented by Title 13, Sections 1160-1167 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), for instance, regulates the safe transportation of hazardous materials and appropriate documentation for all hazardous waste that is transported is required. Construction activities will comply with the guiding regulations. Same for the materials to be used on site during operation, the presence of a number of hazardous materials will cease upon completion of construction and will not be necessary during operation except for additional maintenance or emergency-repair activities. Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations will reduce potential impacts associated with routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, regarding the presence of hazardous materials, the Project's impacts will be less than significant.

9b. **Less than significant impact.** Given the size of Project and the types of hazardous materials needed during construction and operation, hazardous materials on-site would not be present in any significant quantity and any spill is likely to be easily contained. Moreover, use of these materials will be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws, which includes requirements for secondary containment of hazardous materials and appropriate spill response procedures. Therefore, regarding release of hazardous materials, impacts would be less than significant.

9c. **No impact.** The Project is located within the Lake Elsinore Unified School District (LEUSD). The closest school is Rice Canyon Elementary School, which is approximately 0.60 east of the proposed Project site. The proposed Project site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Thus, the proposed Project will not emit hazardous emissions or handling hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

9d. **No impact.** According to the California Environmental Protection Agency's (CEPA) Cortese list, compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, no hazardous materials sites are located at or adjacent to the Project site. As such, no impacts will occur.

9e. **No impact.** The proposed Project is located approximately 18.86 miles southeast of French Valley Airport which is the closest operational airport. Due to the Project's distance from the French Valley Airport, the Project is located outside of the airport's compatibility plan. Additionally, the Project does not entail a use for human occupancy, and minimal workers will be on site during short-term construction activities and maintenance operations of the proposed improvements. Therefore, the Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area. Thus, no impacts would occur.

9f. **No impact.** The proposed Project is not located within public road right of way; therefore, the Project would not physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Thus, no impacts would occur.

9g. Less than significant impact. The City as a whole is categorized as having very high wildfire susceptibility, based on *Figure 3.1 Wildfire Susceptibility* of the City's GP. (GP, p. 3-9) However, the proposed Project consists of repairing and restoring access to the existing Rice Canyon Reservoir and rehabilitation of the existing Reservoir. As such, the Project will not expose people to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires. These facilities are not habitable, and, once construction is complete, people will be on site infrequently and for short durations. Moreover, the Project will not directly or indirectly induce population growth in fire-prone areas. Therefore, the Project's impacts with regard to wildland fires are less than significant.

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5.10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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 onsite or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: Dudek 2022, FEMA, GSP 2021, SGMA, SWRCB, SARWQCB

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

10a. Less than significant impact. The proposed Project site is located within the Santa Ana Watershed (GSP 2021, p. ES-3), and traverses the Rice Canyon Creek. The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (SARWQCB) sets water quality standards for all ground and surface waters within the region including the City. Water quality standards are defined under the Clean Water Act to include both the beneficial uses of specific water bodies and the levels of water quality that must be met and maintained to protect those uses (water quality objectives).

According to the *Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road Improvement Preliminary Design Report*, dated August 2022 prepared by Dudek, the three existing concrete low-water crossings will be

replaced with two concrete low water crossings, designed at-grade with underground cut-off walls to reduce potential for undercutting/erosion of the concrete by the creek flows. Slope protection in the form of riprap on the downstream side of Crossing C will be used to maintain slope integrity. Additional riprap will be implemented on the west side of Crossing A+B and midway down the access road to dissipate water velocity from the hillside and help reduce potential erosion to the roadway. The creek will continue its existing drainage pattern and would not be impeded as a result of the Project. The Project being a utility project and EVMWD not being a Co-Permittee to the local Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES permit would not require post-construction permanent water quality BMPs and does not require a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP).

Construction of the proposed Project includes demolition of existing structures and the use of heavy equipment, which have the potential to release pollutants (e.g., oil from construction equipment, cleaning solvents, paint, etc.) and silt off-site that could impact water quality. However, the Project footprint is greater than one acre and is therefore required to prepare a SWPPP by a Qualified SWPPP Developer (QSD) and implemented onsite by a Qualified SWPPP Practitioner (QSP) pursuant to the statewide Construction General Permit (NPDES General Permit No. CAS000002) issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for construction projects. The purpose of a SWPPP is to minimize construction-related pollution to the maximum extent practicable through the use of best management practices (BMPs).

Once completed, the Project will be very similar to what is existing today – an earthen access road with concrete low-water crossings – and concrete structures like low water crossings in creeks are not contributors of pollution in creeks. Therefore, through implementation of existing regulations to address water quality during construction and Project design, the Project will not contribute to a violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements and impacts are less than significant.

10b. Less than significant impact. The proposed Project site overlies the Elsinore Valley Groundwater Basin (8-044.01) and bounds of the Elsinore Groundwater Management Zone (GMZ). (SARWQCB, p. 3-21) In December of 2021 EVMWD prepared the *Elsinore Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)* on behalf of Elsinore Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) pursuant to the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA).

The Project does not include any wells or groundwater recharge facilities and would not result in increased groundwater pumping. The Project will increase the impervious area by approximately 7,500 square feet with the extended concrete low-water crossings. Because the creek will retain its natural flow path, the potential for groundwater recharge in the canyon would not be negatively affected. For these reasons, the Project will not affect existing groundwater supplies or interfere with recharge in a manner that would impede management of the groundwater basin. Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

10c(i). Less than significant impact. Rice Canyon Creek is a natural drainageway with infrequent high volume storm events. (Dudek 2022, p. 6) The overall width of the incised channels range from approximately 5-feet to 50-feet and the slope along the centerline of the drainage way generally ranges from 4-10 percent with steeper slopes upstream and milder slopes approaching the canyon end. (Dudek 2022, p. 6)

The proposed Project will cross the Rice Canyon Creek through two low-water concrete crossings designed to replace the existing smaller crossings that have failed to withstand the existing flow pattern of the creek and not to change it in any way; therefore, existing drainage patterns will not be altered. Additionally, the Project will incorporate riprap to Crossing A+B, Crossing C, and midway down the access road to maintain downstream slope integrity as well as underground upstream and downstream concrete cut-off walls for both crossings to protect against erosion from creek flows. (Dudek 2022, p. 19)

As mentioned in *Threshold 10a* above, EVMWD will be required to prepare an effective SWPPP in order to minimize soil disturbance, non-stormwater discharges, construction materials, and construction wastes during the construction phase of the Project to prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the construction site to the maximum extent practicable.

Therefore, through implementation of existing regulations for construction discharges, and Project design to maintain existing drainage patterns and minimizing impervious area to that which is required for long-term integrity of the road, the proposed Project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Thus, impacts will be less than significant.

10c(ii). Less than significant impact. As previously mentioned in *Threshold 10c(i)* above, the proposed Project will increase the impervious area by 7,500 square feet. Although the speed of water flowing over smooth surfaces is faster than flow over rough or earthen surfaces, the Project's incremental increase in impervious area in the creek is limited to just the road width and would not result in a substantial increase in the speed or volume of surface runoff that would result in flooding on- or off-site.

Thus, the proposed Project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding. Impacts will be less than significant.

10c(iii). Less than significant impact. As described in *Thresholds 10c(i)* and *10c(ii)* above, the Project would not alter the existing drainage pattern but would instead replace the existing Rice Canyon creek crossings to allow for unimpeded creek flow and robust vehicle access to the Reservoir. Therefore, the Project would not in and of itself result in an increase of flows in the creek that would exceed the capacity of downstream drainage systems. Furthermore, as described in *Threshold 10a*, long-term operation of the Project would not be a source of polluted runoff and through implementation of a construction SWPPP, construction of the Project would be a minimal source of pollution. Therefore, through Project design and implementation of existing regulations, the proposed Project would not create or contribute additional runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff and impacts will be less than significant.

10c(iv). Less than significant impact. As shown on the National Flood Insurance Program, Flood Insurance Rate Map, the Project site is located within Zone A, which is a part of the special flood zone which is identified to have potential to flood during a 1-percent annual flood (100-year flood event) (FEMA). However, the Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road Improvement Preliminary Design Report, analyzed current and past conditions to provide feasible

recommendations. Based on said recommendations, the Project will be designed with riprap protection for Crossing C and with continuous concrete protection for Crossing A and B. Additional riprap will be incorporated on the west side of Crossing A+B and midway down the access road to dissipate water velocity from the hillside and help reduce potential erosion to the roadway. Implementation of the low water crossings would be at-grade and would allow for Rice Canyon Creek to flow continuously. Therefore, the Project would not alter existing conditions. (Dudek 2022, p. 19) Thus, the proposed Project will not impede or redirect flood flows and impacts are less than significant.

10d. Less than significant impact. As discussed in *Threshold 10c(iv)* above, the Project site is located entirely within a 100-year event flood hazard zone (Zone A), which is to be expected because the Project is within the floor of a canyon at the base of a mountain range. Pollutants that could be released from the Project in the event the road is inundated are traces of any leaked petroleum fluids from vehicles onto the concrete crossings. However, because driving on the road will be limited to only that which is required, which is a couple vehicles a couple times per month, the amount leaked onto the road would be minimal and not a source of pollution when inundated.

Tsunamis are large waves that occur in coastal areas. The City is not located in a coastal area; therefore, there is no risk for the release of pollutants due to Project inundation by tsunami.

Seiches are seismically induced oscillation or sloshing of water contained in enclosed bodies including lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and swimming pools. This hazard is dependent upon the frequency of seismic waves, distance and direction from the epicenter, and site-specific design criteria of the enclosed body of water. Lake Elsinore is the largest and closest body of water where a seiche might occur, located approximately three miles southeast of the Project site. Because the Project is located at a higher elevation than the lake, inundation of the Project site from a seiche is unlikely.

For the reasons outlined above, impacts related to the release of pollutants due to inundation are considered less than significant.

10e. Less than significant impact. The Project site is located within the boundaries of the water quality control plan (Basin Plan) for the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Basin Plan is the primary document supporting the RWQCB's regulatory efforts. As previously described, the Project will implement the requirements of an effective SWPPP during construction to reduce any potential construction-related water quality impacts to a less than significant level. Through compliance with SWPPP requirements, the Project is consistent with the Basin Plan.

The proposed Project site overlies the Elsinore Valley Groundwater Basin (8-044.01). Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA), the Elsinore Valley GSA has formed and prepared a GSP dated December 2021. However, since the Project is only repairing existing conditions conflicts with the GSP are unlikely. Therefore, in regard to conflicting or obstructing a water quality control plan, or sustainable groundwater management plan, impacts will be less than significant.

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

References: GP, LLE SP, Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

11a. **No impact.** The proposed Project site is an access road which does not border or intersect through any residential neighborhoods. Implementation of the Project would allow the access to EVMWD's Rice Canyon Reservoir that services the community of Lake Elsinore. Therefore, no impacts associated with dividing an established community would occur.

11b. **No impact.** Since the Project is located within the City, land use is guided by the City's GP land use designation of Specific Plan – La Laguna Estates" (LLE SP) and zoning designation of Natural Open Space – LLE SP. As previously mentioned, the proposed Project entails replacing an existing electrical conduit, rehabilitating existing concrete low-water crossings, repairing the existing access road and performing reservoir rehabilitation repairs to the existing Rice Canyon Reservoir. Since the Project consists of improvements to existing facilities, implementation of the proposed Project will not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation. As such, no impacts will occur.

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5.12. MINERAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: GP, GPEIR

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

12a. Less than significant impact. The GPEIR classifies lands within the City as Mineral Resource Zone-3 (MRZ-3) or MRZ-2. (GPEIR, p. 3.12-10) The GPEIR, *Figure 3.12-1* (GPEIR), identifies the proposed Project site is within MRZ-2. MRZ-2 is defined in the GP as areas of identified mineral resource significance. The GP states that construction aggregate, clay deposits, and crushed stones were found within an area designated as MRZ-2 in the City. (GP, pp. 4-38 - 4-39) However, given the relatively small footprint of the proposed Project site and the proximity to Rice Canyon Creek, it is unlikely that any surface mining or mineral recovery operation could feasibly take place in these areas. Therefore, because the Project site has been previously developed and the Project proposes replacement, repairs and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, impacts would be less than significant.

12b. Less than significant impact. As mentioned in *Threshold 12a,* given the Project site has been previously developed, and although it is located in MRZ-2 it is unlikely that any surface mining or mineral recovery operation could feasibly take place in these areas given the relatively small footprint of the proposed Project site and the proximity to Rice Canyon Creek. Therefore, impacts with regard to the availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery sites would be less than significant.

5.13. NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of 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 the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: ALUC, CalcTool, FTA, GoogleCalc, GP, GPEIR, LEMC, LE SA

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

13a. Less than significant with mitigation. Operation of the proposed Project will generate noise from EVMWD staff and vehicles visiting the reservoir site for maintenance in addition to the annual maintenance of the access road. Since these will not be new sources of permanent noise, operational noise will not be further addressed.

Construction of the proposed Project will generate noise and vibration during construction activities from equipment used at the Project site. As previously discussed in *Threshold 4a,* special status reptiles may be temporarily impacted by construction noise and vibrations. Therefore, the Project would be required to comply with mitigation measure **MM BIO-3,** which requires a qualified biologist to conduct preconstruction surveys to identify the need for protection and relocations of special status reptiles.

Since construction of the proposed Project will generate noise and vibrations during construction activities, and during use of construction vehicles on local streets, some of which are within residential neighborhoods. The standards applicable to the Project are set forth in the City's Municipal Code (MC) Chapter 17.176.080 Noise Control.

According to MC Section 17.176.080 (F) Construction/Demolition, construction noise emitted from mobile equipment cannot exceed 75 A-Weighted Decibels (dBA) Monday through Saturday (except for holidays) from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Single Family Residential areas. Additionally, the MC states that Stationary Equipment cannot exceed 60 dBA, Monday through Saturday (except for holidays) from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Single Family Residential areas, as shown in **Table G – Construction Noise Level Limits,** below. (LEMC)

Table G – Construction Noise Level Limits

Land Use	Noise Source	Days	Hours	Noise Level
Single Family Residential	**Mobile Equipment**	Monday – Saturday (Expect Holidays–	7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	75 dBA L_{max}[1]
		Daily	7:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.	60 dBA L_{max}
	Stationary Equipment	Monday – Saturday (Expect Holidays–	7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	60 dBA L_{max}
		Daily	7:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.	50 dBA L_{max}

Source: City MC Section 17.176.080 (F)
Notes: [1] L_{max} refers to the maximum instantaneous noise level experienced during a given period of time

Various types of equipment will be utilized during Project construction. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has calculated typical noise levels for the construction equipment in the *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*. (FTA) **Table H – Construction Equipment Noise Levels** presents the average noise level generated by the types of equipment to be used during Project construction. According to **Table H**, the highest noise levels, 85 dBA L_{eq}, will be generated by graders, rollers, and scrapers.

Table H – Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment	Typical Noise Level 50 ft from Source, dBA L_{eq}[1]
Skid Steer Loader	80
Tractor/loader/backhoe	80
Grader	85
Rubber Tired Loader	80
Roller	85
Scraper	85

Source: FTA Table 7-1
Notes: [1] L_{eq} represents an average of sound energy that occurs over a specific period. (GPEIR, p. 3.5- 1)

Noise-sensitive land uses are locations where people reside or where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of the land. Residences, schools, and some passive recreation areas would each be considered noise sensitive receptors. The replacement of the electrical conduit will occur at approximately 185 feet (ft) west of existing residences. However, the construction at this location will not be as intensive as the construction of other Project components. The most intensive construction activities will occur at the Project's low water crossings. The nearest residential receptors are located approximately 350 feet (ft) east of the Project's nearest low water crossing. Construction noise impacts resulting from both the replacement of electrical conduit and the construction of the low water crossings are evaluated in the following paragraphs.

Replacement of the electrical conduit is assumed to use one piece of construction equipment and is anticipated to generate the same noise level as a tractor/loader/backhoe. Based on a reference noise level of 80 DBA L_{eq} at 50 feet, and a receptor distance of 185 feet, noise generated during replacement of the electrical conduit is anticipated to be approximately 69 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest residential receptor.[6] Thus, noise generated during replacement of the

[6] Sound levels calculated using Calc Tool and the distance attenuation formula $SPL_2 = SPL_1 - 20 \log(R_2/R_1)$ where SPL_2 is the sound level at the residential receiver; $SPL_{1.}$ = 80 dBA (the noise level of the construction equipment per **Table H**); R_1 = 50 ft (the

electrical conduit is less than the City's MC standard of 75 dBA L_{max} at the nearest residential receptors.

For purposes of the analysis of construction noise at the low water crossings, it is assumed that two of the noisiest pieces of construction equipment, which per **Table H** is 85 dBA, will be operating simultaneously in this location. Since noise is measured in decibels (dB), which are logarithmic units, they cannot be added or subtracted by ordinary arithmetic means. Rather, the combination of two sounds at the same level yields an increase of 3 dBA. (GPEIR, p.3.5-1) Thus, a reference noise level of 88 dBA L_{eq} at 50 ft was utilized to calculate the construction noise level anticipated at the residential receptors 350 feet east of the nearest low water crossing. Using the distance attenuation formula, construction at the low water crossing location is anticipated to result in a noise level of approximately 71 dBA L_{eq} at the residential receptors 350 ft away.[7] Thus, noise generated during construction of the Project's low water crossings is not anticipated to exceed the City's MC standard of 75 dBA L_{max} at the residential receptors.

While implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially increase ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of applicable standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, temporary construction noise and vibration may have impacts to special status reptiles. Therefore, Project would be required to comply with **MM BIO-3**, prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity. Thus, impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

13b. Less than significant impact. Construction projects can generate groundborne vibration through the use of construction equipment. Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment and methods employed, distance to the affected structures and soil type. Operation of construction equipment can cause ground vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish strength with distance. (GPEIR, p. 3.5-46) Additionally, usage of heavy construction equipment during Project construction would temporary and periodic.

Sensitive receptors for vibration include structures (especially older masonry structures), people (especially residents, the elderly, and the sick), and vibration sensitive equipment. (FTA, pp. 23, 186) Ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, but they can achieve the audible and feelable ranges in buildings very close to the site.

Table I – Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment, provides average vibration levels resulting from anticipated project specific construction equipment in a wide range of soil conditions. According to **Table I**, the highest expected vibration level, 0.21 peak particle velocity (PPV), will be generated from the roller.

Table I– Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	PPV at 25 FT (Inches/Second)
Skid Steer Loader	0.003

distance of the reference noise level per **Table H**); R_2 = 185 feet (the distance from the conduit replacement to the residential receiver.) Using this formula, the noise level at SPL_1 is approximately 69 dBA.

[7] Sound levels calculated using Calc Tool and the distance attenuation formula $SPL_2 = SPL_1 - 20 \log(R_2/R_1)$ where SPL_2 is the sound level at the residential receiver; SPL_1 = 88 dBA; R_1 = 50 ft; R_2 = 350 feet (the distance from the low water crossing to the nearest residential receiver.) Using this formula, the noise level at SPL_1 is approximately 71 dBA.

Equipment	PPV at 25 FT (Inches/Second)
Tractor/loader/backhoe	0.089
Grader	0.089
Rubber Tired Loader	0.089
Roller	0.21
Scraper	0.089
Skid Steer Loader	0.003
Loaded Trucks	0.076

Source: FTA, Table 7-4

The City MC Section 17.176.020, Definitions establishes a vibration perception threshold of 0.01 inches/second over the range of one to 100 Hertz (Hz), meaning that the minimum ground or structure borne motion necessary to cause a normal person to be aware of vibration by such direct means as, but not limited to sensation by touch or visual observation of moving objects would need to exceed 0.01 inches/second (LEMC).

As discussed in *Threshold 13a*, the nearest residential receptor to the Project is located approximately 185 ft away from the location of the electrical conduit replacement and the nearest residential receptor to the most intense construction activity is located approximately 350 ft away from the nearest low water crossing. The FTA provides a formula to calculate vibration levels from construction equipment. (FTA, p. 185) The expected vibration level resulting from replacement of the electrical conduit calculated using the reference vibration level from **Table I** for tractor/loader/backhoe of 0.089 PPV at the residences 185 ft away is approximately 0.004 PPV.[8] The expected vibration level associated with construction of the low water crossing calculated using the highest expected reference vibration level from **Table I** of 0.21 PPV (for a roller) at the residential receptor 350 ft away is approximately 0.004 PPV.[9] Vibration levels resulting from Project construction are substantially less than the City's vibration perception threshold of 0.01 inches/second (PPV). Therefore, impacts regarding the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels would be less than significant.

13c. **No impact.** The closest airport to the Project site is Skylark Airport, which is approximately 7.72 miles southwest from the Project site, Skylark Airport is home to Skydive Lake Elsinore and the Lake Elsinore Soaring Club. (LE SA) Skylark Airport is a privately-owned airport with a runway surface composed of gravel and sand, which does not permit optimal conditions for frequent and convenient airport operations. (GP, p. 3-29) Due to the distance from the Project site to Skylark Airport, Project implementation would not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. No impacts will occur.

[8] Vibration Levels were calculated using the FTA formula: $PPV_{equipment} = PPV_{Ref}(25/D)^{1.5}$ (in/sec) where $PPV_{equipment}$ is the vibration level at the residential receiver; PPV_{Ref} = 0.089 (the vibration level for a tracktor/loader/backhoe at 25 ft in PPV from **Table I**); D = 185 ft (the distance from the electrical conduit replacement to the residential receiver), Using this formula $PPV_{equipment}$ = 0.004 PPV.

[9] Vibration Levels were calculated using the FTA formula: $PPV_{equipment} = PPV_{Ref}(25/D)^{1.5}$ (in/sec) where $PPV_{equipment}$ is the vibration level at the residential receiver; PPV_{Ref} = 0.021 (the highest vibration level in PPV from **Table I**); D = ft (the distance from the low water crossing). Using this formula $PPV_{equipment}$ = 0.004 PPV.

5.14. POPULATION AND HOUSING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	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 the extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

14a. **Less than significant impact.** As previously stated, the proposed Project entails the replacement of existing electrical conduit, rehabilitation of three existing concrete low-water crossings, repairs to existing access road and rehabilitation repairs to existing reservoir. Since this Project consists of repairs to existing infrastructure, the Project does not propose an increase in serving capacity that would result in population growth. Thus, the proposed Project does not induce population growth in the City. Although temporary employment opportunities may be created during construction of the Project facilities, this will not induce substantial population growth in Western Riverside County as there exists an ample and available regional labor force. Therefore, the Project will not result in direct or indirect unplanned population growth. As such, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

14b. **No impact.** The proposed Project does not involve the construction, demolition or relocation of existing housing. Since no housing will be displaced, no people will be displaced as a result of Project implementation, no impacts will occur.

5.15. PUBLIC SERVICES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered government 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 public services:				
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Other Public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: GPEIR, Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

15a. **No impact.** Currently the City contracts with the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) for fire protection services. The City currently has four fire stations within City limits based on Figure 3.14-1 Police and Fire Stations (GPEIR, p. 3.14-4) The RCFD Station 85 is located at 29405 Grand Avenue, approximately one mile southeast of the proposed Project. It is expected that this fire station would provide first response to the proposed Project. However, as previously discussed in *Threshold 14a* above, the Project will not directly or indirectly generate population growth in the City. Additionally, the Rice Canyon Reservoir is an existing facility. Thus, implementation of the Project would not require the construction of additional governmental facilities or increase the demand for the fire protection service. No impacts will occur.

15b. **No impact.** Police protection services are provided by the Lake Elsinore Police Department under contract by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. The Lake Elsinore Police Department/Sheriff's Station is located on the northeast edge of the lake at 333 W. Limited Avenue, approximately 5.11 miles southeast of the Project site. As previously mentioned in *Thresholds 14a* and *15a* above, the Project doesn't increase population growth. Thus, the proposed Project will not result in substantial adverse physical impacts related to the increase in demand for police protection. Therefore, no impacts will occur.

15c. **No impact.** As noted in *Thresholds 14a* and *15a* above, the Project would not increase population. Thus, the Project would not increase the demand for school services in Lake Elsinore Unified School District. Thus, the proposed Project will not result in substantial adverse physical impacts related to schools. No impacts will occur.

15d. **No impact.** The proposed Project will not directly require the construction or expansion of public recreational facilities as it does not propose new residential uses. Thus, the Project will not increase the demand for new park facilities or increase demand for park services. No impacts will occur.

15e. **No Impact.** Since the Project does not directly or indirectly increase population growth, as mentioned in *Thresholds 14a* and*15a* above, the Project will not increase the demand on other public services or facilities. No impacts will occur.

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5.16. RECREATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would/does the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

16a. **No impact.** The proposed Project entails the replacement of existing electrical conduit, rehabilitation of three existing concrete low-water crossings, repairs to existing access road and rehabilitation repairs to existing reservoir. As previously discussed in *Threshold 14a* above, the Project will not increase population growth thus will not cause a direct increase in the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or public recreational facilities. No impacts will occur.

16b. **No impact.** See response to *Threshold 16a*, above. The proposed Project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction of recreational facilities. Therefore, the Project does not require any additional construction that will have an adverse effect on the physical environment and create an impact. No impacts will occur.

5.17. TRANSPORTATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a 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, subdivision (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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

17a **No impact.** Although the proposed Project includes repairs to an existing access road, this road is privately owned and will continue to be only accessible to EVMWD staff. Since this private road will be used for maintenance purposes, no new traffic will be generated by the proposed Project. Construction of the Project would not necessitate road closures or pedestrian facilities.

Therefore, no impacts are anticipated related to potential conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

17b. **No impact.** State *CEQA Guidelines* section 15064.3, subdivision (b) indicates that vehicles miles traveled (VMT) as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. However, as stated in *Threshold 17a* and the *Project Description* above, the Project proposes replacement, repairs and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. No changes in operations are proposed. Thus, the Project would not increase VMT. Therefore, no impacts would occur with regard to being in conflict or inconsistent with State *CEQA Guidelines* section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

17c. **No impact.** As mentioned in *Threshold 17a* and the *Project Description* above the Project proposes the reconstruction of an existing private access road to the existing Rice Canyon Reservoir. The proposed Project would not significantly alter existing roadway configurations and geometrics. The Project does not include any component that will result in an incompatible use of the existing roadways. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not result in a substantial increase in hazards. No impacts will occur.

17d. **Less than significant impact.** As previously mentioned in *Threshold 17a* above, the Project proposes the reconstruction of an existing private access road to the existing Rice Canyon Reservoir. As such, implementation of the proposed Project will not impact emergency access. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

5.18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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), or	☐	☒	☐	☐
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. In applying the criteria set forth subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

18a(i) –(ii). Less than significant with mitigation. As discussed in *Threshold 5a* above, there are no resources listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or a local register of historical resources at the Project site.

On March 7, 2022, the EVMWD provided notification to the following tribes in accordance with Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52): the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pechanga Band of Mission Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, and Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians. On March 15, 2022, EVMWD sent out a follow up email, which the following three tribes responded to: Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pechanga Band of Mission Indians, and Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians. Both the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians and Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians requested consultation, while the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian's deferred to other tribes in the area.

EVMWD followed up with the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians on May 2, 2022 and May 16, 2022 to schedule consultation, with no response. On June 23,2022, EVWMD provided an update to indicate Project-related technical documents would be available at a later date. In December 2022, EVMWD provided links to all Project documentation including technical reports, Project design plans and grading plans for review. Having received no response, EVMWD followed-up with the Pechanga Band on January 18, 2023 and January 30, 2023. To date, no response has been received.

EVMWD held a consultation with the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians on June 2, 2022. The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians requested to review specific Project-related technical reports conducted along with Project design plans, and grading plans. EVMWD subsequently provided all requested documentation to Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians. After review of documentation provided by EVMWD, on January 30, 2023, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians expressed agreement with the proposed measures, requested a copy of final monitoring report, and concluded consultation. As outlined in **MM CR-1**, in the event of discovery of pre-historic finds, copies of all applicable documentation shall be provided to the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians.

Therefore, in the event of an accidental discovery of a cultural and/or historical resource; implementation of mitigation measures **MM CR-1** and **MM CR-2** will ensure impacts remain less than significant. Therefore, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

5.19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric 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 inadequate 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

References: AB939, CAL-B, CAL-C, CAL-D, CAL-E, EVMWD UWMP, GPEIR, Project Description

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

19a. **Less than significant impact.** The Project's construction and operation will not require construction, relocation or alteration of current stormwater drainages. The Project would utilize current drainage ditches by incorporating drainage swales along the road where natural ditches have already formed. Additionally, the low-water crossing proposed by the Project are designed at-grade. Therefore, these new low-water crossings would not impede or alter existing water flow.

The Project's construction and operation will not require construction or relocation of electrical power, natural gas, telecommunication facilities, sewer or potable water. The Project would replace the existing electrical conduit; however, no new or expanded electrical service is required.

For these reasons, the proposed Project would not cause significant effects with regard to the construction of water, sewer, storm water drainage, electrical power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities and impacts will be less than significant.

19b. No impact. The Project consists of repairs to an existing reservoir and access road. No expansion or increase in capacity is proposed. As such, the Project will not impact water supplies.

19c. No Impact. The Project does not generate any wastewater. Rather, the Project consists of repairs to an existing water reservoir and access road. As such, no impacts will occur.

19d. Less Than Significant Impact. Construction waste would be generated during construction of the Project. Standard conditions in EVMWD construction specifications require the contractors to dispose of construction waste in facilities licensed to accept such waste. Since the location of the disposal landfill is unknown at this time, it is reasonable to anticipate the waste generated from the removal of existing infrastructure would be taken to the nearest permitted landfill: Badlands, El Sobrante, or Lamb Canyon. (Cal-B) All three of the landfills are Class III municipal solid waste landfills. (GPEIR, p. 3.16-5) According to CalRecycle databases, the Badlands Landfill will remain operational until 2026, Lamb Canyon Landfill until 2032, and El Sobrante Landfill until 2051 (CAL-C, CAL-D, CAL-E). Given the number of landfills to which the solid waste will be redirected to and their estimated closure dates, sufficient capacity is expected for the limited increase of solid waste produced during construction. Furthermore, the Project is not a use that generates operational solid waste. Impacts would be less than significant.

19e. No impact. Federal, State, and local statutes and regulations regarding solid waste generation, transport, and disposal are intended to decrease solid waste generation through mandatory reductions in solid waste quantities (e.g., through recycling and composting of green waste) and the safe and efficient transport of solid waste. As mentioned in *Threshold 19d,* above, the proposed Project entails reconstruction of existing facilities. Also, the Project would not produce solid waste once construction is complete.

During construction, the proposed Project would dispose of construction waste in permitted facilities and would not conflict with any existing regulations. Therefore, this Project is expected to have a no impact regarding compliance with solid waste regulations.

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5.20. WILDFIRE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as 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 (such as 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

References: CAL-A, GP

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

20a. **No impact.** The proposed Project site is located within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA), in an area designated as very high fire hazard as shown on the GP *Figure 3.1 Wildfire Susceptibility* and on the California Department of Forest and Fire Protection Map. (GP, p. 3-10, CAL-A) However, the proposed Project site consists of the reconstruction of an existing private access road that leads to an existing reservoir. Because the Project will not entail any public road closures, no impacts with regard to impairing an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan would occur.

20b. **Less than significant**. The combination of Southern California's Mediterranean climate, with its winter and spring rainfall and hot, dry summers, and the frequency of high wind velocity creates optimum conditions for wildfires. The City is known for periodic high-velocity wind conditions through the Temescal Valley and the steep canyons to the northwest, west and southwest areas. These winds are due mostly to the area's topography, which forms a natural wind tunnel along the valley and through the canyons. (GP, p. 3-7) Further, the Project site is also subject to the occasional Santa Ana conditions.

Implementation of the proposed Project does not include any component that will substantially change the slope of either the Rice Canyon Reservoir site or the access road or exacerbate wildfire risks. Because the Project entails improvements at locations with existing facilities, which are currently maintained by District staff, Project implementation will not result in an increased exposure to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. For these reasons, impacts are less than significant.

20c. **Less than significant.** The Project is merely repairing existing infrastructure and will continue to maintain it once construction is complete. Therefore, construction and maintenance of the Project would not exacerbate fire risks or result in significant impacts to other resources. Thus, impacts will be less than significant.

20d. **Less than significant.** The proposed Project would not alter existing drainage patterns. Construction of the proposed Project would require grading of the existing earthen access road and reconstruction of the low-water crossings. However, as stated in *Threshold 10a and 10c*, the Project's incremental increase in impervious area in the creek is limited to just the road width and would not result in a substantial increase in the speed or volume of surface runoff. The road was designed at-grade with underground cut-off walls to reduce potential for undercutting/erosion of the concrete by the creek flows. Slope protection in the form of riprap on the downstream side of Crossing C will be used to maintain slope integrity. Additional riprap is required on the west side of Crossing A+B and midway down the access road as shown in to dissipate water velocity from the hillside and help reduce potential erosion to the roadway. Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures to significant risk due to downstream flooding, landslides, due to alterations to current existing drainage pattern. Thus, impacts will be less than significant.

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5.21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Does the project:				
a) Does the project have the potential to 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 animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plant or animal, 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 which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

References: Analysis in the preceding checklist.

EXPLANATION OF CHECKLIST ANSWERS

21a. Less than significant with mitigation. The proposed Project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. As indicated in the foregoing analysis, either no impacts, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated would occur with respect to each of the environmental issues analyzed in this Initial Study.

As indicated in *Section 5.4 Biological Resources* of this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community. The results of the biological resources reports contained in Appendices B.1 through B. 7, and the preceding analysis indicate that with the implementation of mitigation measures **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

As discussed in *Section 5.5 Cultural Resources* and *Section 5.18 Tribal Cultural Resources* of this Initial Study, there are no known historic or prehistoric resources at the Project site. Due to previous disturbance, the Project site is unlikely to contain intact buried archaeological deposits. As further discussed in those sections, with implementation mitigation measures **MM CR-1** and **MM CR-2**, potential impacts resulting from an inadvertent discovery of an archaeological or tribal cultural resource will be reduced to less than significant.

Thus, the proposed Project will not degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or an endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, impacts are less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

21b. Less than significant with mitigation. Based on the analysis identified in this Initial Study, the Project would not result in any cumulatively considerable impacts. The Project would restore permanent access to the District's existing Rice Canyon Reservoir. Since this Project site was previously utilized by EVMWD staff to provide maintenance to the Rice Canyon Reservoir and no expansion of the reservoir is proposed, implementation of the Project is not considered growth-inducing as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) and would not induce, either directly or indirectly, population and/or housing growth. Potential impacts during construction activities would be reduced through mitigation measures outlined in the Initial Study. Therefore, the proposed Project will not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable, and impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

21c. Less than significant with mitigation. Effects on human beings were evaluated as part of this analysis of this IS under the aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources as it relates to human remains, geology and soils, GHG, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and services systems thresholds. Based on the analysis and conclusions in this IS, impacts for these topics were considered to have no impact, less than significant impact, or less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Therefore, potential direct and indirect impacts on human beings that result from the proposed Project are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

SECTION 6.0 REFERENCES

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