

# **Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**for**

## **The Ridge Guest Ranch General Plan Amendment No. 210006; Change of Zone No. 2100014; and Conditional Use Permit No. 210121**

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**November 2023**

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**APPENDICES**

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- Appendix A:** *Map My County*
- Appendix B:** *Ridge Ranch Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 11-19-2021*
- Appendix C:** *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, The Ridge Wellness, Inc., Mountain Center, Riverside County, California, CUP 210121; GPA 210006; CZ 2100014, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 568-070-006, -007 and -021, prepared by Searl Biological Services, 12-17-2021*
- Appendix D:** *A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of Conditional Use Permit No. 210121, General Plan Amendment No. 210006, Change of Zone No. 2100014, +37.96 Acres of Land in Mountain Center, Riverside County, California, prepared by Jean A. Keller, Ph.D., 12-2021*



- Appendix E1:** *Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022
- Appendix E2:** *Report of Active Faulting, The Ridge Wellness Center, Approximately 36-acre Parcel, Assessor Parcel Number 568-070-021, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County, California*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, 10-12-2020
- Appendix E3:** *Geotechnical Review and Supplemental Analyses, Ridge Wellness Center*, prepared by Sladden Engineering, 5-18-2023
- Appendix F:** *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 568-070-006, -007 and -021, 56475 Apple Canyon Road, Mountain Center, Riverside County, California 92561*, prepared by Geo Tek, Inc., 6-16-2020
- Appendix G1:** *Ridge Wellness Center Water System, Preliminary Technical Report*, prepared by Specialized Utilities Services Program, 4-24-2023
- Appendix G2:** *Well Inspection Report*, prepared by Heritage Well Service, 4-8-2021
- Appendix G3:** *Well Sampling Analytical Report*, prepared by Babcock Laboratories, Inc., 8-3-2021
- Appendix G4:** *Project-Specific Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023
- Appendix G5:** *Preliminary Hydrology and Hydraulics Report for The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023
- Appendix H:** *The Ridge Guest Ranch Fire Protection Plan, APN 568-070-021*, prepared by Firewise 2000, LLC, 6-12-2023
- Appendix I:** *Ridge Ranch Trip Generation and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Evaluation*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 8-26-2021
- Appendix J:** Site Photos, prepared by Matthew Fagan Consulting Services, Inc., 6-2022
- Appendix K:** Project Plans, 5-2023
- Appendix L:** ATS System Design, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022
- Appendix M:** OWTS Report, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021

## Commonly Used Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAQS	Ambient Air Quality Standards
AB	Assembly Bill
AC	Acre
ACOE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
ADP	Area Drainage Plans
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
AQ/GHG	Air Quality/Green House Gas
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plans
ARB	Air Resources Board
Basin	South Coast Air Basin
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BUOW	Burrowing Owl
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalARP	California Accidental Release Prevention Program
CalEEMod™	California Emissions Estimator Model™
Cal/EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CalFire	Riverside County Fire Department
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
CZ	Change of Zone
dB	Decibel
dBA	A-Weighted Decibel
dBA CNEL	A-weighted decibel Community Noise Equivalent Level
dBA Leq	A-weighted decibel equivalent noise level
EAP	Existing Plus Ambient Growth Plus Project
EAPC	Existing Plus Ambient Growth Plus Project Plus Cumulative

FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Act
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GP	General Plan
GPA	General Plan Amendment
GPEIR	General Plan Environmental Impact Report
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HCOC	Hydrologic Conditions of Concern
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HOV	High-Occupancy Vehicle
HRA	Health Risk Assessment
LOS	Level of Service
LST	Localized Significance Thresholds
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MM	Mitigation Measure
MSHCP	Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
MTCO <sub>2e</sub>	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
N <sub>2</sub> O	Nitrous Oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NEPSSA	Narrow Endemic Plants Survey Area
NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen Dioxide
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NO <sub>x</sub>	Oxides of Nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
O <sub>3</sub>	Ozone
Pb	Lead
PFCs	Perfluorocarbons
PHS	Preliminary Hydrology Study
PM	Afternoon
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Fine Particulate Matter
PM <sub>10</sub>	Respirable Particulate Matter
Ppb	Parts Per Billion
Ppm	Parts Per Million
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
PV	Photovoltaic

RCFC&WCD	Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
RCIP	Riverside County Integrated Project
RCSD	Riverside County Sheriff's Department
RCTC	Riverside County Transportation Commission
RTA	Riverside Transit Authority
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RV	Recreational Vehicle
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SARWQCB	Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SO <sub>2</sub>	Sulphur Dioxide
SO <sub>x</sub>	Sulphur Oxides
SoCAB	South Coast Air Basin
Sq. Ft.	Square Feet
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
VPD	Vehicles Per Day
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan

**Environmental Assessment (CEQ / EA) Number:** CEQ210210

**Project Case Type (s) and Number(s):** General Plan Amendment (GPA) 210006; Change of Zone (CZ) 2100014; and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 210121 “The Ridge Guest Ranch”

**Lead Agency Name:** Riverside County Planning Department

**Address:** P.O. Box 1409, Riverside, CA 92502-1409

**Contact Person:** Kathleen Mitchell, Urban Planner III

**Telephone Number:** 951-955-6836

**Applicant’s Name:** The Ridge Wellness, Inc., Caroline Legrand

**Applicant’s Address:** 6487 Cavalleri Road, # 429, Malibu, CA 90265

## I. PROJECT INFORMATION

### Project Description:

#### Location

The Ridge Guest Ranch property is located at 56475 Apple Canyon Road in Mountain Center, an unincorporated community in southwest Riverside County. The site is located off of Highway 74, the Pines to Palms Highway, south of the town of Idyllwild, southeast of the City of Hemet, and northeast of Lake Hemet (see **Figure 1, Regional Location** and **Figure 2, Vicinity Map**). The site occupies approximately 36.11 acres also known as Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 568-070-021.

#### Characteristics

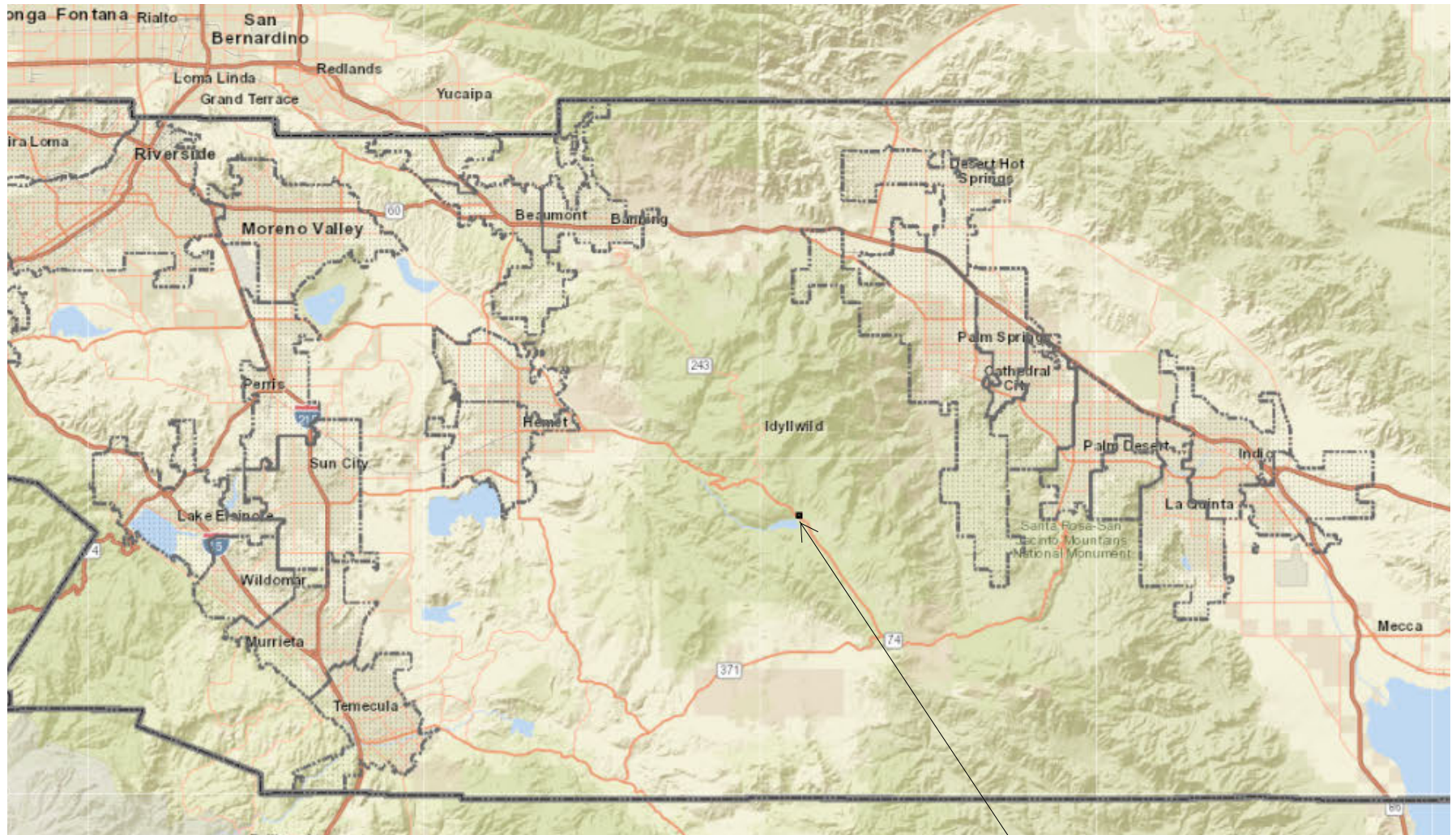
The Ridge Guest Ranch Project proposes to construct a wellness and immersive nature camp with a variety of recreational activities on the property. The various Project improvements and land uses on the site are outlined in **Table 1, Project Characteristics**. A maximum of 10% of the site will support buildings, parking, driveways, and other improved areas while the remaining 90% of the site will remain as agriculture and recreational open space. All of the buildings will be one story with a maximum height of 18 feet 3 inches. The Project will provide a total of 60 parking spaces for staff (18 spaces) and guests (42 spaces) plus 3 spaces for electric vehicle (EV) charging. The Ranch will have 51 total employees with a maximum of 35 employees onsite at any one time, and 36 guest cabins which could accommodate up to 2 persons each. This equals a worst-case estimate of 107 persons on the site at maximum occupancy. **Figure 3, Conceptual Site Plan**, shows the approximate layout and relationship of proposed uses on the Project site.

**Table 1  
Project Characteristics**

<b>Use/Improvement</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Site</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Developed Areas/Buildings</b>				
Guest Cabins and Tents (Zones A-C)	--	--	19,646	30 cabins & 6 “glamping” tents
Common Area Buildings (arrival and dining)	--	--	5,986	Lounge, kitchen, utility room, & dining room (48 seats)
Wellness Cabins	--	--	3,154	Wellness and healing programs
Activity Hub Building	--	--	902	Includes outdoor pool
Wellness Basecamp Building	--	--	2,566	Main indoor guest activity building
Administration/Storage Building	--	--	970	Includes storage
<i>Sub-Total Buildings*</i>	<i>0.67</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>29,035*</i>	
Areas around buildings	0.69	--	--	Mainly in the central and northern portions of the site
Parking and Circulation	2.15	--	--	
<i>Sub-Total Developed Areas</i>	<i>3.51</i>	<i>9.7%</i>	<i>29,035</i>	
<b>Open Space Uses</b>				
Existing Agriculture	2.06	--	--	Southeast portion of site
Recreation/Open Space	30.65	--	--	All portions of the site except the northeast corner
<i>Sub-Total Open Space</i>	<i>32.71</i>	<i>90.3%</i>	--	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36.11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29,035*</b>	<b>0.19 FAR</b>

Source: Project Plans (**Appendix K**) FAR = floor area ratio of the building area (0.67 ac) to total developed area (3.51 acres)\* does not include greenhouses, only refers to occupied structures

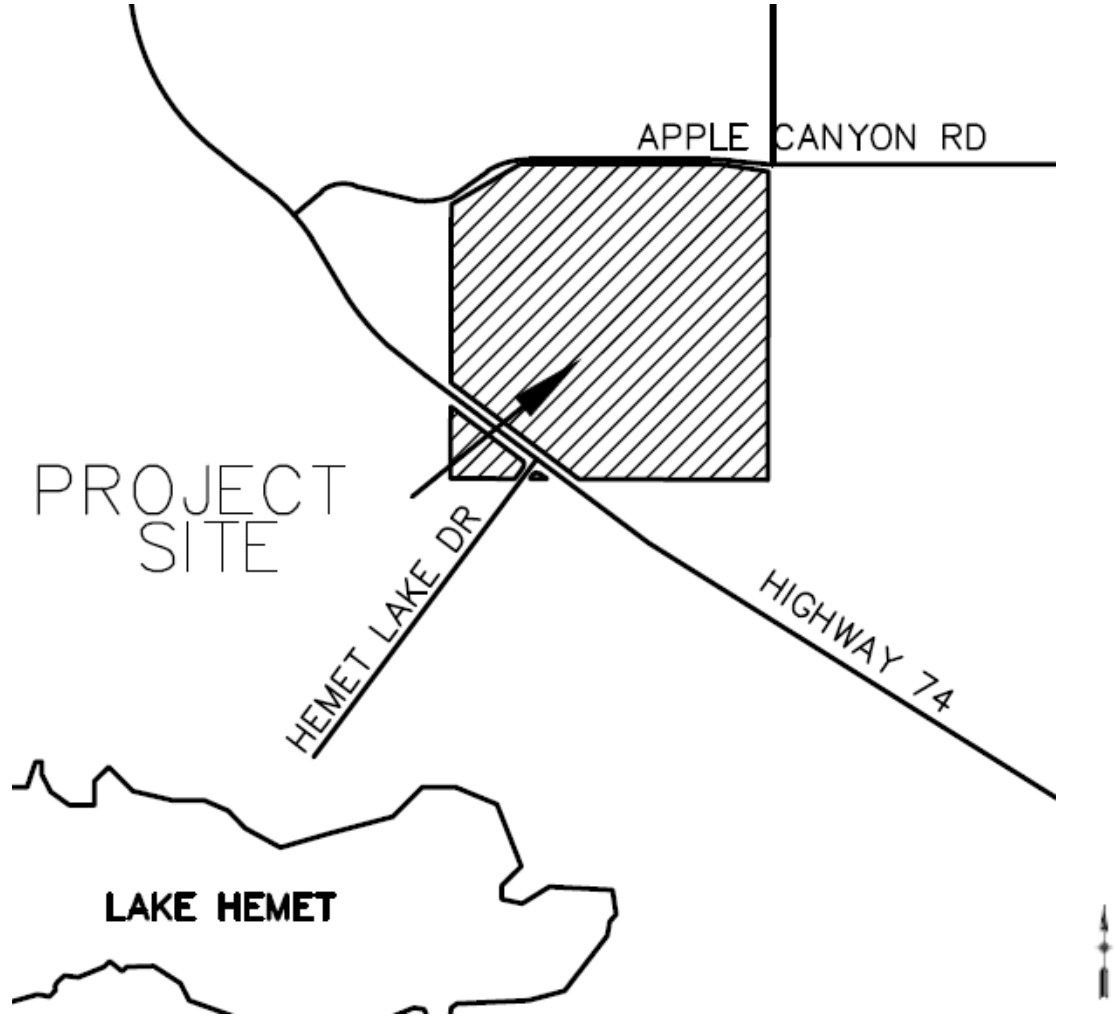
**FIGURE 1**  
**Regional Location Map**



Source: Map My County [https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public)

**SITE**

**FIGURE 2**  
**Vicinity Map**



Source: Project Plans (**Appendix K**)



**FIGURE 3**  
**Conceptual Site Plan**



Source: Project Plans (Appendix K)

In the application materials, the Project is described as follows:

*The Ridge Guest Ranch proposes an eco-conscious private guest ranch on 36.11 acres. The project site will retain all the natural vegetation and all the historic large pine trees within its design. The Ridge will be designed to facilitate a full immersion nature experience in Mountain Center and the Ranch will offer a variety of self-development therapies and recreational activities such as natural hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, water-based activities at Lake Hemet, in addition to cultural and environmental education of the area will be all part of the experience at the Ranch. The project proposes to construct guest cabins and manufactured guest tents, with a wellness center, kitchen and dining room, and activity hub and lap pool, and a large agricultural site and food lab for all guests to experience.*

The applicant indicates that the consumption of alcohol and tobacco products will be strictly prohibited on the site.

### Phasing

The Ranch is expected to be constructed in one phase with site preparation and construction taking approximately one year. It is possible the facility may open with some lesser number of cabins, but the Project will be built out as funds are available and there is need for expanded facilities.

### Grading

Grading is expected to be balanced onsite with 20,500 cubic yards of cut and fill. Earthwork will be in the eastern portion of the site for the proposed buildings and improvements, while the Hurkey Creek channel and the land west of the creek will remain as permanent open space with no grading or improvements.

### Circulation/Access/Parking

The Project will take access from Apple Canyon Road along the north side of the site. Regional access is via Highway 74, Pines to Palms Highway, from the west. The Project proposes a roller compacted decomposed granite access road around the eastern portion of the site planned for the developed uses (i.e., cabins, buildings, parking, etc.).

Employee parking calculations are based upon one (1) parking stall per two employees (35 employees max. per shift = 18 spaces). Due to the remoteness of the site, employee carpooling will be highly encouraged. Guest parking calculations are based upon 1 parking stall per cabin/tent space (42 cabins/tents = 42 spaces). Total parking onsite will be 60 spaces.

### Existing/Proposed General Plan and Zoning Designations

The current General Plan land use designation of the site is Open Space – Rural and it is currently zoned Light Agriculture 20-acre minimum parcels (A-1-20). The Project proposes to change the land use designation to Open Space – Recreation and change the zoning classification to Natural Assets (N-A). It should be noted that the proposed GPA and CZ also apply to APNs 568-070-006 and -007, but for the purposes of the analysis in this Initial Study, the Project site is only located on APN 568-070-021. This may also account for minor discrepancies in acreages between various technical reports when describing the Project site.

Surrounding land uses are all related to light agriculture or resource conservation. The zoning and land use designations of the site and surrounding area are delineated in **Table 2, Land Use and Zoning Designations**. The proposed wellness ranch is consistent with the existing onsite zoning and General

Plan land use designations. The proposed Project is also consistent and compatible with surrounding land uses which are shown in **Figure 4, Aerial Photo**.

**Table 2  
Land Use and Zoning Designations**

<b>Location/ Direction</b>	<b>General Plan Land Use Designation</b>	<b>County Zoning</b>	<b>Existing Land Uses</b>
<u>Project Site</u> Existing Proposed	Open Space – Rural Open Space – Recreation	Light Agriculture (A-1-20) Natural Assets (N-A)	Agriculture & Vacant
North	Open Space – Conservation Habitat	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Hurkey Creek Park and Camp Ronald McDonald
South	Open Space – Rural Open Space – Recreation	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Lake Hemet and Vacant Land
East	Open Space - Rural	Light Agriculture (A-1-20)	Vacant Land (USFS)
West	Open Space – Conservation Habitat	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Vacant Land (USFS)

Sources: Map My County, REMAP land use mapping, GoogleEarth, Project Plans (**Appendix K**)



**FIGURE 4**  
**Aerial Photo**



Source: Map My County [https://gis.countyofrivside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis.countyofrivside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public)

**A. Type of Project:** Site Specific ; Countywide ; Community ; Policy .

**Total Project Area:**

<b>Residential Acres:</b> N/A	<b>Lots:</b> N/A	<b>Units:</b> N/A	<b>Projected No. of Residents:</b> N/A
<b>Commercial Acres:</b> N/A	<b>Lots:</b> N/A	<b>Sq. Ft. of Bldg. Area:</b> N/A	<b>Est. No. of Employees:</b> N/A
<b>Industrial Acres:</b> N/A	<b>Lots:</b> N/A	<b>Sq. Ft. of Bldg. Area:</b>	<b>Est. No. of Employees:</b>
<b>Other (Institutional):</b> Approx. 36.11 acres	<b>Lots:</b> 1	<b>Sq. Ft. of Bldg. Area:</b> Existing 0 / New Construction 35,924	<b>Est. No. of Employees:</b> 51

**A. Assessor’s Parcel No(s):** APN No. 568-070-021

**B. Street References:** 56475 Apple Canyon Road in Mountain Center, just east of Highway 74 (Pines to Palms Highway)

**C. Section, Township & Range Description or reference/attach a Legal Description:** Section 4, Township 6 South, Range 3 East

**D. Brief description of the existing environmental setting of the Project site and its surroundings:**

The Project site is located in the San Jacinto Mountains just east of Highway 74 and south of the town of Idyllwild in Riverside County. The topography of the site varies substantially from 4,445 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along the northern boundary down to 4,334 feet AMSL along the southern boundary. The entire region is seismically active due to a number of active regional earthquake faults and a splay of the active San Jacinto Fault passes through the western portion of the site in a northwest-southeast direction. The central portion of the site is dominated by Hurkey Creek which encloses a 100-year flood plain in the central portion of the site which flows in a northwest-southeast direction. Runoff on the site generally flows toward the south.

Due to its elevation, relatively remote location, and rural/open space land uses, the Project area experiences relatively good air quality except during hot summer months when inversion conditions sometimes occur. The Project area is moderately wooded and supports a variety of native vegetation, including dozens of pine trees of various sizes, as well as native wildlife including small to large mammals and some listed species. The site is close to Lake Hemet which supports a variety of native plant and animal species as well. The San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains have been utilized by Native Americans for thousands of years, the most notable being the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians which is a federally recognized tribe of Cahuilla Indians. Area soils are relatively granitic in nature and somewhat sandy and well drained.

Area land uses are summarized in **Table 2** but are generally agricultural, open space/vacant land, or related to activities at Lake Hemet, Hurkey Creek Park, and Camp Ronald McDonald just north of the site. Public services and utilities are provided by the County and number of private companies. The Project area is in a Very High Fire Hazard Zone and is within a State Responsibility Area for fire protection.

**II. APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING REGULATIONS**

**A. General Plan Elements/Policies:**

- 1. Land Use:** The Project site has a General Plan land use designation of Open Space – Rural and the Project proposes to change the designation to Open Space – Recreation. The Project also proposes to change the existing zoning of Light Agriculture (A-1-20) to Natural Assets (N-A). The proposed use will be consistent with the Riverside Extended Mountain

Area Plan (REMAP) and other applicable land use policies within the General Plan. In particular, Policies LU 2.1, LU 4.2, LU 7.1-LU 7.8, LU 9.1, LU 12.1, LU 14.1, LU 14.3, LU 14.4, LU 18.2, LU 20.1, and LU 21.1 are implemented by this Project.

2. **Circulation:** Adequate circulation facilities exist to serve the Project. The proposed Project meets with all other applicable circulation policies of the General Plan. In particular, Policies C 2.1, C 20.1, and C 20.5 are implemented by this Project.
3. **Multi-purpose Open Space:** The Project is adjacent to open space/forest lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Hurkey Creek and the onsite land west of the creek do support habitat for listed or otherwise sensitive species, riparian/riverine resources, a natural drainage but no wetlands or vernal pools, and does support important biological resources under the MSHCP. The Project will preserve the central and western portions of the site (i.e., Hurkey Creek and the fault zone) of the site as permanent open space. The proposed Project meets with all other applicable Multipurpose Open Space element policies. Policies OS 2.1, OS 3.7, OS 5.1-5.7, OS 7.4, OS 7.5, OS 8.1, OS 9.3, OS 9.6, OS 16.1, OS 17.1, OS 18.1, OS 19.3, OS 20.2, and OS 22.1-22.5 have been implemented in this Project.
4. **Safety:** The bed and banks of Hurkey Creek define the 100-year flood plain which crosses the center of the site from north to south. The developed areas of the proposed Project will not be located within a flood plain. The western portion of the site, west and south of Hurkey Creek, is in an identified earthquake fault zone. The site is not in a subsidence susceptible area, has a low risk of liquefaction, but is in a very high fire area. The proposed Project has allowed for sufficient provision of emergency response services to the Project through the Project design and payment of development impact fees. The proposed Project meets with all other applicable Safety Element policies. Policies S 2.1, S 3.3, S 3.4, S 4.1, and S 4.7 are implemented through the Project.
5. **Noise:** The Project proposes very low intensity recreational activities that are not expected to result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. There are no sensitive receptors to the east, south or west of the site. While the closest sensitive receptor (caretaker's residence) is located approximately 125 feet north of the western boundary of the site, it is located approximately 732 feet from the planned area of disturbance on the site (i.e., northeast portion east of the creek). The Project meets all other applicable Noise Element Policies. Due to its low intensity and rural setting, policies N 2.3 and N 13.1 are implemented by this Project.
6. **Housing:** Although there will be temporary guests and staff staying on the site, the proposed Project will not create any permanent housing, so this does not apply.
7. **Air Quality:** The proposed Project is a relatively low intensity institutional use and has been conditioned to control any fugitive dust during grading and construction activities. The proposed Project meets all other applicable Air Quality element policies. In particular, policies AQ 2.2, AQ 2.3, and AQ 5.4 are implemented by the Project.
8. **Healthy Communities:** The Project will emphasize an eco-friendly lifestyle and sustainability and will support limited onsite agricultural activities. It meets all applicable policies of the Healthy Communities Element of the General Plan. This Project is relatively unique in its use of land and its facilities; however, policies HC 2.1, 2.2, HC 4.1, and HC 11.1 are applicable to the Project.

**a) Environmental Justice Summary:** The Project site is not located in an environmental justice community.

**B. General Plan Area Plan(s):** Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP)

**C. Foundation Component(s):** Rural

**D. Land Use Designation(s):** Existing: Open Space – Rural / Proposed: Open Space – Recreation

**E. Overlay(s), if any:** N/A

**F. Policy Area(s), if any:** None

**G. Adjacent and Surrounding:**

1. **General Plan Area Plan(s):** REMAP

2. **Foundation Component(s):** Rural

3. **Land Use Designation(s):**

**North:** Open Space – Conservation Habitat

**South:** Open Space – Rural and Open Space - Recreation

**East:** Open Space – Rural

**West:** Open Space – Conservation Habitat

Reference **Figure 5, General Plan Land Use Designations**

4. **Overlay(s), if any:** N/A

5. **Policy Area(s), if any:** None

**H. Adopted Specific Plan Information**

1. **Name and Number of Specific Plan, if any:** N/A

2. **Specific Plan Planning Area, and Policies, if any:** N/A

**I. Existing Zoning:** Light Agriculture (A-1-20)

**J. Proposed Zoning, if any:** Natural Assets (N-A)

**K. Adjacent and Surrounding Zoning:**

**North:** Natural Assets (N-A-160)

**South:** Natural Assets (N-A-160)

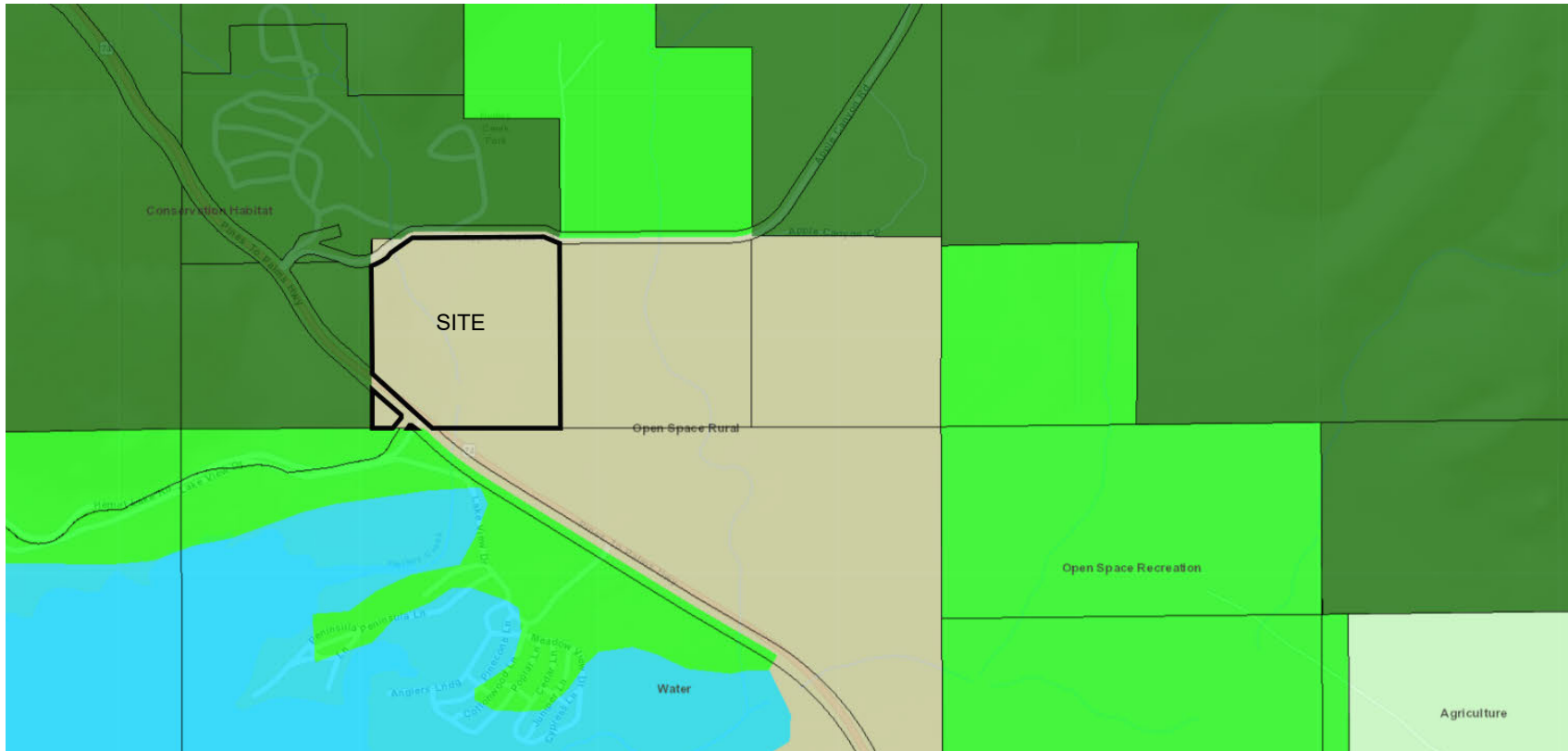
**East:** Light Agriculture (A-1-20)

**West:** Natural Assets (N-A-160)

Reference **Figure 6, Zoning Classifications**



**FIGURE 5**  
**General Plan Land Use Designations**

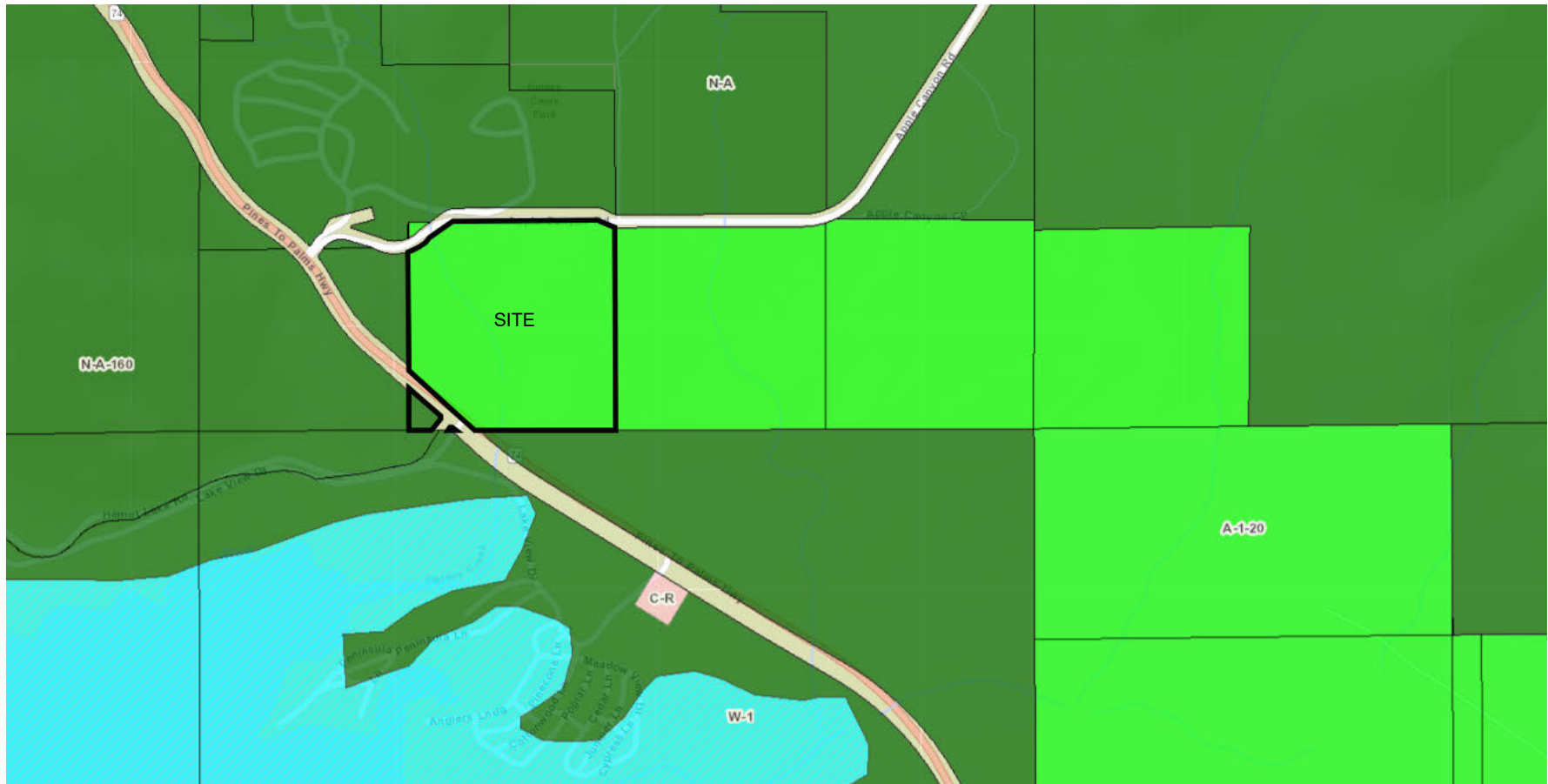


Source: Map My County [https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public)





**FIGURE 6**  
**Existing Zoning Classifications**



Source: Map My County [https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public)

- A-1: Light Agriculture
- C-R: Rural Commercial
- N-A: Natural Assets
- W-1: Watercourse, Watershed and Conservation Areas

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

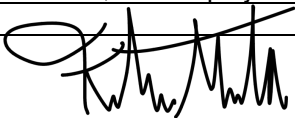
The environmental factors checked below ( X ) would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” or “Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Forest Resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources              | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildfire                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Paleontological Resources                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils      | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services               |  |

**IV. DETERMINATION**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

<b>A PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/NEGATIVE DECLARATION WAS NOT PREPARED</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project <b>COULD NOT</b> have a significant effect on the environment, and a <b>NEGATIVE DECLARATION</b> will be prepared.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project, described in this document, have been made or agreed to by the project proponent. <b>A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION</b> will be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project <b>MAY</b> have a significant effect on the environment, and an <b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT</b> is required.
<b>A PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/NEGATIVE DECLARATION WAS PREPARED</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, <b>NO NEW ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED</b> because (a) all potentially significant effects of the proposed project have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration pursuant to applicable legal standards, (b) all potentially significant effects of the proposed project have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, (c) the proposed project will not result in any new significant environmental effects not identified in the earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, (d) the proposed project will not substantially increase the severity of the environmental effects identified in the earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, (e) no considerably different mitigation measures have been identified and (f) no mitigation measures found infeasible have become feasible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration pursuant to applicable legal standards, some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in California Code of Regulations, Section 15162 exist. An <b>ADDENDUM</b> to a previously-certified EIR or Negative Declaration has been prepared and will be considered by the approving body or bodies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that at least one of the conditions described in California Code of Regulations, Section 15162 exist, but I further find that only minor additions or changes are necessary to make the previous EIR adequately apply to the project in the changed situation; therefore a <b>SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT</b> is required that need only contain the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that at least one of the following conditions described in California Code of Regulations, Section 15162, exist and a <b>SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT</b> is required: (1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; (2) Substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or (3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any the following:(A) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;(B) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR or negative declaration;(C) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measures or alternatives; or,(D) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR or negative declaration would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measures or alternatives.

Signature 

Date 12/19/23

Kathleen Mitchell, Urban Planner III

For: John Hildebrand  
Planning Director

Printed Name

## V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ASSESSMENT

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000-21178.1), this Initial Study has been prepared to analyze the proposed project to determine any potential significant impacts upon the environment that would result from construction and implementation of the project. In accordance with California Code of Regulations, Section 15063, this Initial Study is a preliminary analysis prepared by the Lead Agency, the County of Riverside, in consultation with other jurisdictional agencies, to determine whether a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an Environmental Impact Report is required for the proposed project. The purpose of this Initial Study is to inform the decision-makers, affected agencies, and the public of potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>AESTHETICS</b> Would the Project:				
<b>1. Scenic Resources</b>				
a) Have a substantial effect upon a scenic highway corridor within which it is located?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and unique or landmark features; obstruct any prominent scenic vista or view open to the public; or result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Figure 5, General Plan Land Use Designations*, included in Section I of this IS; Riverside County General Plan, Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP) –Figure 8, *REMAP Scenic Highways*; *Caltrans Scenic Highways website*, 2022; Project Plans (**Appendix K**); Site Photos (**Appendix J**); **Figure 3, Conceptual Site Plan** and **Figure 4, Aerial Photo** (located in Section I of this IS); and Google Earth website 2022.

### **Findings of Fact:**

Aesthetics generally refer to the identification of visual resources, the quality of one’s view, and/or the overall visual perception of the environment. The issue of light and glare is related to both the creation of daytime glare due to the reflection of the sun (such as on glass surfaces) and/or an increase in nighttime ambient lighting levels (such as from building lights, streetlights, and vehicle headlights).

The Project site is located within the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP), one of nineteen (19) planning areas within the County of Riverside’s General Plan. The REMAP is situated in the southwest portion of Riverside County in the San Jacinto Mountains adjacent to SR-74 (the “Pines to Palms Highway”) approximately 3.3 miles southeast of the community of Mountain Center and 4.6 (air) miles southeast of the town of Idyllwild. SR-74 the principal access route to the Project

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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area. The surrounding area is mountainous and contains largely vacant land with scattered developed uses. The area is dominated by open space features including surrounding forest lands and Hemet Lake located 0.4-mile southwest of the Project site.

The REMAP Land Use Plan has been adopted to maintain the predominantly rural, agricultural, and open space character of the mountain communities and areas in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains within Riverside County.

The Project site and much of the surrounding forested land is designated as Open Space-Rural with light agriculture or natural assets zoning. The remaining areas are designated for either Open Space-Recreation or Open Space-Conservation Habitat with Lake Hemet located less than half a mile southwest of the site.

- a) *Would the Project have a substantial effect upon a scenic highway corridor within which it is located?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project site is located in western Riverside County within the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP). According to REMAP Figure 8, Scenic Highways, SR-74 in the region of the Project site is a state designated Scenic Highway (called the Pines to Palms Highway) as well as a National Forest Scenic Byway. According to the Caltrans “Scenic Highways” program website<sup>1</sup>, SR-74 is a state-designated scenic highway but for some reason is not on the State “List of Officially Designated County Scenic Highways”.

The Project site is located adjacent to SR-74 along its southwest boundary and the proposed buildings and related improvements of the Project will be approximately 700 feet northeast of SR-74 with a “frontage” distance of 667 feet based on the Record of Survey for the property. At the posted speed limit of 40 miles per hour, the Project site would be visible for approximately 12 seconds to travelers along SR-74.

The Project proposes a very low intensity guest ranch or camp, with one-story cabins, tents, and other buildings which are designed to be visually compatible with the existing forest and agricultural uses on the site (i.e., maximum height 18 feet and all earth tone colors). The Project proposes to preserve essentially all of the existing pine trees which are mainly in the northern portion of the site. The Project will provide only eco-friendly nature-oriented recreational and educational activities on the site for its guests. The Project site plan (see the previous **Figure 3, Conceptual Site Plan**, shows the buildings and related improvements that will be located in the northeast portion of the site, separated from SR-74 by approximately 700 feet and perpendicular to either direction of travel on the highway which will help minimize any visual intrusion by the camp on SR-74. An artist’s rendering of the proposed Project on the site is shown in **Figure 1-1, Project Rendering**. In addition, direct views of the site from the highway will be blocked by large trees along the east bank of Hurkey Creek which is between the highway and the proposed buildings.

Based on the above information, the Project will not substantially or adversely alter views along this portion of SR-74, a designated scenic route through this area. Due to the nature and scale of the Project, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

<sup>1</sup> <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>



**FIGURE 1-1**  
**Project Rendering**



Source: Project Plans (**Appendix K**)

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- b) *Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and unique or landmark features; obstruct any prominent scenic vista or view open to the public; or result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project site is located in an unincorporated rural community of southwest Riverside County identified in the *Map My County* known as Mountain Center. The site is also approximately five (5) miles southeast of the town of Idyllwild in the San Jacinto Mountains. The property is just northeast of SR-74, a state-designated scenic highway, and Hemet Lake. The Project site contains native vegetation including dozens of tall pine trees, the (seasonal<sup>2</sup>) Hurkey Creek, and varying topography typical of the mountain community in this area. The site slopes down from the north toward SR-74 along the southwest boundary of the site.

As outlined in Threshold 1.a above, the Project proposes a very low intensity development guest ranch or camp with one-story cabins, tents, and other buildings which will be designed to be visually compatible with the existing forest and natural drainage on the site (i.e., maximum height 18 feet and all earth tone colors). The Project proposes to preserve essentially all of the existing pine trees which are mainly in the northern portion of the site. The Project will provide only eco-friendly nature-oriented recreational and educational activities on the site. The previous **Figure 3, Conceptual Site Plan**, shows the buildings and related improvements will be located in the northeast portion of the site. An artist’s rendering of the Project on the site is shown in **Figure 1-1, Project Rendering**. Direct views of the site from the highway will be blocked by large trees along the east bank and a ridge on the west bank of Hurkey Creek and views from other uses to the north will be partially blocked by the large number of trees between the planned buildings and Apple Canyon Road which forms the north boundary of the site.

Approximately 30 of the 36-acre site will remain in its natural condition, including Hurkey Creek and the sloping land between the creek and SR-74. Since the east bank of the creek supports a large number of trees and shrubs, views of the site from the highway will be very limited. Per **Table 1**, the Project as proposed would introduce new low intensity one-story buildings on the eastern 10% of the site while the remaining 90% of the site will remain as natural open space.

Due to its isolated location, topography, and vegetation, the proposed Project would not obstruct any prominent vistas, views of surrounding open space, habitat, conservation, or agricultural land or result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view.

Based on the above information, the Project will not have a significant environmental impact to aesthetics. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and unique or landmark features; obstruct any prominent scenic vista or view open to the public; or result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- c) *In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

<sup>2</sup> <https://reserve.rivcoparks.org/hurkey-creek/camping>

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Less Than Significant Impact**

As outlined in Thresholds 1.a and 1.b above, the Project site is located in a non-urbanized area that is part of the San Jacinto Mountains and adjacent to SR-74, a state-designated Scenic Highway (i.e., Pines to Palms Highway). The area is considered scenic, and the Project proposes a guest ranch with low intensity one-story buildings which is intended to be compatible with the outdoor natural setting.

Since the Project proposes one-story buildings, cabins, and tents, there are few improved uses in the surrounding area, and the site is relatively isolated from public view, the Project will have a less than significant impact to the existing visual character and its surroundings. Based upon the information provided in Thresholds 1.a through 1.c, the Project will have a less than significant impact on the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**2. Mt. Palomar Observatory**

a) Interfere with the nighttime use of the Mt. Palomar Observatory, as protected through Riverside County Ordinance No. 655?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); REMAP, Figure 5, REMAP Mt. Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area; and Ordinance No. 655 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Regulating Light Pollution).*

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project interfere with the nighttime use of the Mt. Palomar Observatory, as protected through Riverside County Ordinance No. 655?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

According to the *REMAP (Figure 5, REMAP Mt. Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area)*; the Project site is located within Zone B of the designated Special Lighting Area that surrounds the Mt. Palomar Observatory. At its closest point, the Project site is approximately 21½ miles north from the Observatory.

The following policy is contained in the *REMAP*:

- **REMAP 8.1:** Adhere to the lighting requirements of Riverside County Ordinance No. 655 for standards that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory.

Ordinance No. 655 was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on June 7, 1988 and went into effect on July 7, 1988. The intent of Ordinance No. 655 is to restrict the permitted use of certain light fixtures emitting into the night sky undesirable light rays which have a detrimental effect on



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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astronomical observation and research at the Palomar Observatory. Ordinance No. 655 contains approved materials and methods of installation, definitions, general design requirements, requirements for lamp source, and shielding, prohibitions and exceptions.

Proposed outdoor lighting sources will be minimal given the Project's natural and environmental orientation. However, parking lot lights and building mounted lights for safety will adhere to Ordinance No. 655 which is a standard condition of approval; it is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA, as it applies to all development projects uniformly. Based on the above information, the Project will not have a significant environmental impact on aesthetics in terms of lighting. With the Project design and conformance to Ordinance No. 655, any impacts associated with implementation of the Project would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**3. Other Lighting Issues**

a) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Expose residential property to unacceptable light levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); SJVAP, Figure 5, REMAP Mt. Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Area; Ordinance No. 655; and Ordinance No. 915 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Regulating Outdoor Lighting); and Figure 4, Aerial Photo, provided in Section I of this IS.*

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Light sources at the Project site are intended to be minimal but include some security lighting for buildings and parking areas previously described herein.

New sources of light and glare associated with construction activities on the property may occur. These additional artificial light sources are typically associated with nighttime security lighting since all exterior construction activities are limited to daylight hours in the County. In addition, workers, either arriving to the site before dawn, or leaving the site after dusk, may generate additional construction-related light sources. The amount and intensity of light anticipated from these construction sources would be modest as the lighting needed will be solely for visibility or for security of the site during the nighttime hours. Additionally, these impacts will be temporary, of short-duration, and will cease when Project construction is completed.

The proposed Project would result in a modest amount of new sources of light and glare (building mounted lights) in addition to the new ranch or camp-related uses. Once operational, the Project

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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would be required to comply with Ordinance No. 655 and Ordinance No. 915, which restricts lighting hours, types, and techniques of lighting and requires the use of low-pressure sodium fixtures and hooded fixtures to prevent spillover light or glare.

Ordinance No. 915 requires all outdoor luminaires to be located, adequately shielded, and directed such that no direct light falls outside the parcel of origin onto the public right-of-way. Ordinance No. 915 also prohibits blinking, flashing and rotating outdoor luminaires, with a few exceptions.

Based on the above information, the Project will have no environmental impact to aesthetics. The Project would be required to comply with the County of Riverside conditions of approval that requires lighting restrictions. These are typically standard conditions of approval and are not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA. With conformance to Ordinance No. 655 and Ordinance No. 915, any impacts associated with implementation of the Project would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project expose residential property to unacceptable light levels?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The area in general is characterized by hilly and mountainous terrain in all directions with SR-74 along the southwest boundary of the site. Much of the surrounding land is forested and vacant or classified as various kinds of open space (recreation, habitat, etc.). There are no residences in the immediate vicinity of the site, and the closest full-time inhabited structures are caretaker cabins at the Lake Hemet Campground approximately 1,000 feet to the southwest, at Camp Ronald McDonald over 732 feet to the north, and a single-family residence located approximately 1,000 feet west of the planned Project developments on the north side of Apple Canyon Road. The Project is an eco-friendly nature-oriented guest ranch or camp and so is expected to have minimal lighting that would affect nearby neighbors.

As discussed in Threshold 2.a., construction impacts will be temporary, of short-duration, and will cease when Project construction is completed. Once a certificate of occupancy has been issued, conformance with Ordinance No. 655, and Ordinance No. 915, will ensure that any impacts are expected to be less than significant from implementation of the Project.

Based on the above information, the Project will not have a significant environmental impact to aesthetics. Therefore, there are no potential Project-specific impacts that could expose residential property to unacceptable light levels. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**AGRICULTURE & FOREST RESOURCES** Would the Project:

**4. Agriculture**

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				
b) Conflict with existing agricultural zoning, agricultural use or with land subject to a Williamson Act contract or land within a Riverside County Agricultural Preserve?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Cause development of non-agricultural uses within 300 feet of agriculturally zoned property (Ordinance No. 625 "Right-to-Farm")?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, prepared by Searl Biological Consulting, 12-17-2021 (Appendix C); Project Plans (Appendix K); Riverside County General Plan Figure OS-2 "Agricultural Resources"; California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (DOC-FMMP) website; Google Earth website; Soil Survey of Western Riverside Area, California, prepared by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service), 1971; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey; and Ordinance No. 625 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Providing a Nuisance Defense for Certain Agricultural Activities, Operations, and Facilities and Providing Public Notification Thereof).*

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project 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?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

According to the State Department of Conservation-Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (DOC-FMMP) website, the "Important Farmland Finder" website, and *Map My County*, the Project site has not been mapped by the State DOC, and thus is not officially designated as "Farmland". However, the land immediately north of the site, across Apple Canyon Road, is classified as Unique Farmland but is not actively being farmed at this time. No other designated Farmland has been mapped on the surrounding lands by the DOC. Additionally, most of the Project site and surrounding lands have open space rural, open space recreation, and open space conservation habitat land use designations in the County's Riverside Extended Mountains Area Plan (REMAP). The Project site and the land east of the site are zoned Light Agriculture (A-1-20), but it does not appear these lands is or has been used for any agricultural production now or in the recent past. A change of zone to Natural Assets (N-A) is proposed which will not affect the number of agricultural uses on the site.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Conservation Service, 2021), the Project site is underlain by two main soil series as described below:

- **Oak glen-rush families complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes:** A well-drained complex with alluvium parent material. The depth to the restrictive feature and water table is more than 80 inches. Approximately 80 percent of the site is underlain by this soil found in the flatter areas and natural drainage channel on the site.
- **Oak Glen-Morical, very deep families complex, 2 to 30 percent slopes:** A well- drained complex with alluvium parent material. The depth to the water table is more than 80 inches. Approximately 20 percent of the site is underlain by this soil found in the steeper (southwest) portion on the site.

The NRCS considers “prime” agricultural soils to be those that have an agricultural suitability of Class I or II when irrigated. The onsite soil groups have agricultural suitability ratings of Class III-IV so neither are considered “prime” agricultural soils by the NRCS (SCS 1971).

Implementation of the proposed Project will not 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. While there are Unique Farmlands north of the site, they will not be affected by the proposed Project so its impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*b) Would the Project conflict with existing agricultural zoning, agricultural use or with land subject to a Williamson Act contract or land within a Riverside County Agricultural Preserve?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The current General Plan Land Use Designation for the Project site is Open Space Rural while the existing zoning designation for the site is Light Agriculture – 20-acre minimum lot size (A-1-20). The proposed zoning for the entire site is Natural Assets (N-A). The zoning and General Plan land use designations for lands within the Project area are shown in **Table 4-1, Land Use and Zoning Designations of the Project Area**. The land east of the Project site is also zoned Light Agriculture (A-1-10), but it does not appear the land is being used for any agricultural production, at this time.

**Table 4-1  
Land Use and Zoning Designations of the Project Area**

Location/ Direction	General Plan Land Use Designation	County Zoning	Existing Land Uses
Project Site Existing Proposed	Open Space – Rural Open Space – Recreation	Light Agriculture (A-1-20) Natural Assets (N-A)	Agriculture & Vacant Guest Ranch
North	Open Space – Conservation Habitat	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Hurkey Creek Park and Camp Ronald McDonald
South	Open Space – Rural Open Space – Recreation	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Lake Hemet and Vacant Land
East	Open Space - Rural	Light Agriculture (A-1-20)	Vacant Land
West	Open Space – Conservation Habitat	Natural Assets (N-A-160)	Vacant Land

Sources: Map My County, REMAP land use mapping, GoogleEarth, Project Plans (**Appendix K**)

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The Project applicant has already planted 100 fruit trees in the eastern portion of the site in the area of the site plan designated for agriculture. The Project application materials indicate the following regarding agriculture:

*“Sustainability at its core, an important aspect of the ranch is to be agriculturally focus and to use 2 acres of the existing agriculture area to tend to permaculture. The vegan and health focused menu has been created with the cycle of the seasons in mind. We have worked with the local community (Idyllwild Nursery Gardens) to get the land ready and tilled for its first harvest which occurred this August. We planted 100 fruit trees in May, creating the meditation maze near the sacred Owl Tree. The plan is to also welcome a local beekeeper onsite next Spring. The Ridge’s intention is to provide farm to table organic food to its guests. The agricultural is considered as an important educational aspect of the project.*

*The site’s compost station will be located nearby and seen as well as an educational part of the project.*

*We will be coordinating with the Agriculture Degree Program at College of the Desert to create a paid internship that allows students to practice on-site skills. Palm Desert offers many locations for students to work with ornamental plants and turfgrass, but it is limited in its opportunities to learn about sustainable farming. The Ridge would be a haven where students can get hands-on experience composting, growing produce from seeds and working in connection with the land. Mountain Center’s mild climate offers a unique chance to learn about plants that are much more challenging to grow in Palm Desert.”*

According to the application materials, the Project proposes to install and operate a number of agricultural and related activities on the site, but it is not anticipated these activities will have a substantial effect on agricultural production at the County level. The proposed Natural Assets (N-A) zoning would allow the guest ranch to be permitted since it would be similar in character and intensity to other uses permitted in the zone. The proposed facilities will be consistent with the proposed zoning and General Plan land use designations for the site. However, it is clear agricultural activities will be supported on the site as the Project is implemented. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not conflict with existing agricultural zoning or agricultural use. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

The Project site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract, and it is not within a Riverside County Agriculture Preserve. No impacts will occur.

- c) *Would the Project cause development of non-agricultural uses within 300 feet of agriculturally zoned property (Ordinance No. 625 “Right-to-Farm”)?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As discussed under Threshold 4.b above, the land adjacent to the Project to the east is zoned Light Agriculture (A-1-20) but it does not appear the land is being used for any agricultural production at this time. The Project would increase human activity on the site which would result in incremental increases in area traffic, noise, etc., but there are no active agricultural properties within 300 feet of the Project site. Also as discussed under Threshold 4.b, the Project will have an agricultural orientation and have a number of low intensity agricultural activities onsite.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Based on the analysis above, the Project would introduce some low intensity activities (i.e., non-agricultural uses) within 300 feet of agriculturally zoned property to the east as they relate to Ordinance No. 625 (“Right-to-Farm”). However, the nature of the proposed use indicates that any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

d) *Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As discussed under Thresholds 4.b and 4.c, the Project proposes to develop new structures and repurpose the site into a Guest Ranch but with a number of supporting low intensity agricultural-related activities. The Project would increase human activity on the site which would result in incremental increases in area traffic, noise, etc.

There are no farms or active farmland in the surrounding area so it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed Project will involve changes in the existing environment which could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**5. Forest**

a) 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 Govt. Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Figure 4, Aerial Photo*, provided in Section I of this IS; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) website; and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project 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 Govt. Code section 51104(g))?*

**No Impact**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) identifies forest land as:

*“Land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.”*

The Project site does contain a number of pine trees, mainly in the northern section of the site and along the eastern bank of Hurkey Creek. In addition, the Project site is adjacent to land managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and within the San Bernardino National Forest to the north and east. The area is somewhat mountainous and is generally considered to be forest land. However, the Project site and surrounding properties are not currently defined, zoned, managed, or used for forest land as identified in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) in that trees have not been and are not planned to be harvested from this site or immediate surrounding area. In addition, the CALFIRE Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) website mapping does not indicate the Project area contains any identified or specific forest resources although it is adjacent to USFS land. Therefore, no impacts will occur from Project development, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

**No Impact**

As discussed in Threshold 5.a, the USFS manages lands to the north and east of the site as part of the San Bernardino National Forest. However, there are no active timber harvesting or forest-related management activities presently occurring on or adjacent to the Project site. Therefore, the Project will not result in any loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impacts will occur from Project development, and no mitigation is required.

c) *Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

**No Impact**

As discussed in Thresholds 5.a and 5.b, the Project site and surrounding areas do contain trees, but the area is not being managed or harvested as part of any identified forest resources or plan. Therefore, the Project would not result in any changes in the existing environment which could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impacts will occur from Project development, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**AIR QUALITY** Would the Project:

**6. Air Quality Impacts**

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?				
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Ranch Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, County of Riverside, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 11-19-2021 (AQ/GHG Study, Appendix B).*

**Note:** Any tables or figures in this section are from the *AQ/GHG Study*, unless otherwise noted.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

CEQA requires a discussion of any inconsistencies between a proposed Project and applicable General Plans and Regional Plans (CEQA Guidelines Section 15125). The regional plan that applies to the proposed Project includes the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s (SCAQMD) - Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Therefore, this section discusses any potential inconsistencies between the proposed Project and the referenced AQMP.

The purpose of this discussion is to set forth the issues regarding consistency with the assumptions and objectives of the AQMP and to analyze whether the proposed Project would interfere with the region’s ability to comply with Federal and State air quality standards. If the decision-makers determine that the proposed Project is inconsistent, the lead agency may consider project modifications or inclusion of mitigation measures to eliminate the inconsistency.

The SCAQMD CEQA Handbook states:

"New or amended General Plan Elements (including land use zoning and density amendments), Specific Plans, and significant Projects must be analyzed for consistency with the AQMP".

Strict consistency with all aspects of the AQMP is usually not required. A project should be considered consistent with the AQMP if it furthers one or more policies and does not obstruct other policies.

The SCAQMD CEQA Handbook identifies two key indicators of consistency:

1. Whether the project will result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the AQMP; and
2. Whether the project will exceed the assumptions in the AQMP in 2016 or increments based on the year of project buildout and phase.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Criterion 1 - Increase in the Frequency or Severity of Violations**

The results of the short-term construction emission levels and long-term operational emission levels show that the Project would not result in significant impacts based on the SCAQMD regional and local thresholds of significance. Therefore, the proposed Project would not contribute to the exceedance of an air pollutant concentration standard and is found to be consistent with the AQMP for the first criterion.

**Criterion 2 - Exceed Assumptions in the AQMP**

Consistency with the AQMP assumptions is determined by performing an analysis of the proposed Project with the assumptions in the AQMP. The emphasis of this criterion is to ensure that the analyses conducted for the proposed Project are based on the same forecasts as the AQMP.

The 2016-2040 Regional Transportation/Sustainable Communities Strategy, prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in 2016, includes chapters on the following issues:

- Challenges in a Changing Region;
- Creating a plan for our future; and
- The Road to Greater Mobility and Sustainable Growth.

These chapters currently respond directly to federal and state requirements placed on SCAG. Local governments are required to use these as the basis of their plans for purposes of consistency with applicable regional plans under CEQA.

The Project will provide a “recreation and education-based healing ranch with 36 guest accommodations with the main goal of providing guests the opportunity to reconnect with nature”. The Project would construct 30 guest rooms and 6 guest tents with up to 31,331 square feet of new one-story buildings including a common area building with a lounge, kitchen and dining area, a greenhouse, an activity hub center, a wellness “basecamp” facility, and an administration and storage building. The site is designated for open space and agricultural uses but the low scale development (i.e., one-story buildings) and low intensity of uses on the site indicates that any increase in the amount of operational emissions, beyond what was previously anticipated for the site, is considered less than significant, as outlined in the regional and local emissions analysis in Threshold 6.b. As a result, the Project will not significantly increase emissions compared to what is currently allowed and projected in the AQMP for this region. Therefore, the Project is found to be consistent with the AQMP for the second criterion.

Based on the analysis above, the Project will not conflict with, or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*b) Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project site is located in the South Coast Air Basin. It is noted, state and federal air quality

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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standards are often exceeded in many parts of the SCAB. **Table 6-1, South Coast Air Basin Attainment Status**, lists the attainment status for the criteria pollutants in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB).

**Table 6-1  
South Coast Air Basin Attainment Status<sup>1</sup>**

Pollutant	State Status	National Status
Ozone	Nonattainment	Nonattainment (Extreme) <sup>2</sup>
Carbon monoxide	Attainment	Attainment (Maintenance)
Nitrogen dioxide	Attainment	Attainment (Maintenance)
PM <sub>10</sub>	Nonattainment	Attainment (Maintenance)
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Lead	Attainment	Nonattainment (Partial) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taken from California Air Resources Board <http://www.arb.ca.gov/desig/adm/adm.htm>

<sup>2</sup> 8-Hour Ozone

<sup>3</sup> Partial Nonattainment designation – Los Angeles County portion of Basin only

A discussion of the Project’s potential short-term construction impacts, and long-term operational impacts is provided below.

**Construction Emissions**

The following section analyzes the proposed Project’s short-term construction emissions for the criteria pollutants. Due to the low amount and intensity of uses proposed, construction is anticipated to take approximately one year and could begin as early as spring 2023. As worst-case assumption, the *AQ/GHG Study* assumed the entire site would be graded but, due to the low intensity one-story proposed buildings, grading is actually expected to be minimal and balanced onsite. It should be noted the air quality study was prepared in 2021 when the Project was first contemplated so the *AQ/GHG Study* used the 2020.4.0 version of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) which was the most current at that time. The parameters used to estimate construction emissions, such as the type of equipment, worker and vendor trips and trip lengths, etc. utilize the CalEEMod defaults. The CalEEMod default construction equipment list is shown in **Table 6-2, Construction Equipment Assumptions Phase**.

Potentially Significant Impact      Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated      Less Than Significant Impact      No Impact

**Table 6-2  
Construction Equipment Assumptions Phase<sup>1</sup>**

Phase	Equipment	Amount	Hours Per Day <sup>1</sup>	Soil Disturbance Rate (Acres/8hr-Day) <sup>2</sup>	Equipment Daily Disturbance Footprint (Acres)	Total Phase Daily Disturbance Footprint (Acres)
<b>Site Preparation</b>	Rubber Tired Dozers	3	8	0.5	1.5	2.0
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	4	8	0.5	2.0	
<b>Grading</b>	Excavators	2	8	0.0	0.0	2.0
	Graders	1	8	0.5	0.5	
	Rubber Tired Dozers	1	8	0.5	0.5	
	Scrapers	2	8	1.0	2.0	
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	2	8	0.5	1.0	
<b>Building Construction</b>	Cranes	1	7	0.0	0.0	1.3
	Forklifts	3	8	0.0	0.0	
	Generator Sets	1	8	0.0	0.0	
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	7	0.5	1.3	
	Welders	1	8	0.0	0.0	
<b>Paving</b>	Pavers	2	8	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Paving Equipment	2	8	0.0	0.0	
	Rollers	2	8	0.0	0.0	
<b>Architectural Coating</b>	Air Compressors	1	6	0.0	0.0	0.0

<sup>1</sup> CalEEMod Defaults.

<sup>2</sup> Soil disturbance rates are based on the SCAQMD Fact Sheet for Applying CalEEMod to Localized Significance Thresholds.

The quantity of fugitive dust estimated by CalEEMod is based on the pieces of equipment used during and grading. CalEEMod estimates the worst-case fugitive dust impacts will occur during the grading phase. The maximum daily disturbance footprint would be 5.0 acres per 8-hour day with all equipment in use.

Air Quality Regional Significance Thresholds

The SCAQMD has established air quality emissions thresholds for criteria air pollutants for the purposes of determining whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment per Section 15002(g) of the State CEQA Guidelines. By complying with the thresholds of significance,

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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the Project would be in compliance with the SCAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and the federal and state air quality standards.

**Table 6-3, SCAQMD Regional Significance Thresholds**, lists the air quality significance thresholds for the six criteria air pollutants analyzed in this section. Lead is not included as part of this analysis as the Project is not expected to emit lead in any significant measurable quantity.

**Table 6-3  
SCAQMD Regional Significance Thresholds**

Pollutant	Construction (lbs./day)	Operation (lbs./day)
NO <sub>x</sub>	100	55
VOC	75	55
PM <sub>10</sub>	150	150
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	55	55
SO <sub>x</sub>	150	150
CO	550	550

Regional Air Quality Impacts from Construction

Regional air quality emissions include both on-site and off-site emissions associated with construction of the Project. Regional daily emissions of criteria pollutants are compared to the SCAQMD regional thresholds of significance. The Project must follow all standard SCAQMD rules and requirements with regards to fugitive dust control, as well as other construction-related emissions. Implementation of these standard requirements is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA.

**Table 6-4, Regional Construction Emissions** shows that the Project’s daily construction emissions will be below the applicable SCAQMD regional air quality standards and thresholds of significance. As a result, the Project would not contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Furthermore, by complying with the SCAQMD standards, the Project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Table 6-4  
Regional Construction Emissions**

Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs./day) <sup>1</sup>						
Project Emissions	VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Maximum <sup>1</sup>	11.67	87.04	78.17	0.21	30.40	17.29
SCAQMD Threshold	75.0	100.0	550.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds Threshold (?)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

<sup>1</sup> Maximum daily emissions during summer or winter; includes both on-site and off-site Project emissions.

As shown in **Table 6-4**, regional construction daily emissions of criteria pollutants are expected to be below the allowable thresholds of significance for all criteria pollutants. Therefore, Project impacts would be less than significant.

**Operational Emissions**

Operational emissions occur over the life of the Project and are considered “long-term” sources of emissions. Operational emissions include both direct and indirect sources (mobile source emissions, energy source emissions, areas source emissions and other source emissions). Operational activities associated with the proposed Project will result in emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), carbon (CO), oxides of sulfur (SO<sub>x</sub>), respirable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Operational emissions would be expected from the following primary sources:

- Mobile Source Emissions;
- Area Source Emissions; and
- Energy Source Emissions.

*Mobile source emissions* are from motor vehicles and are the largest single long-term source of air pollutants from the operation of the Project. Emissions are also generated from *area sources* such as the consumption of natural gas for heating and architectural coatings (painting). *Energy source emissions* typically occur off-site at a power plant and are considered an indirect source of emissions.

Long-term operational air pollutant impacts from the Project are shown in **Table 6-5, Regional Operational Emissions**.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Table 6-5  
Regional Operational Emissions**

Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs./day) <sup>1</sup>						
Project Emissions	VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Maximum <sup>1</sup>	1.79	1.86	9.03	0.02	1.83	0.53
SCAQMD Threshold	55.0	55.0	550.0	150.0	150.0	55.0
Exceeds Threshold (?)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

<sup>1</sup> Maximum daily emissions during summer or winter from area, energy, and mobile sources.

The maximum daily emissions analyzed in **Table 6-5** include both on-site and off-site Project emissions. The Project's daily operational emissions will be below the applicable SCAQMD regional air quality standards and thresholds of significance, and the Project would not contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

With adherence to standard County conditions and compliance with applicable SCAQMD rules, the Project will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. Implementation of these standard requirements is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

c) *Would the Project expose sensitive receptors, which are located within one (1) mile of the Project site, to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Localized Construction Analysis Modeling Parameters

CalEEMod calculates construction emissions based on the number of equipment hours and the maximum daily disturbance activity possible for each piece of equipment. The following Project parameters were assumed in order to compare CalEEMod reported emissions against the localized significance threshold lookup tables:

- The off-road equipment list (including type of equipment, horsepower, and hours of operation) assumed for the day of construction activity with maximum emissions.
- The maximum number of acres disturbed on the peak day.
- Any emission control devices added onto off-road equipment.
- Specific dust suppression techniques used on the day of construction activity with maximum emissions.

Air quality emissions were analyzed using the SCAQMD's Mass Rate Localized Significant Threshold (LST) Look-up Tables. **Table 6-6, SCAQMD Localized Significance Thresholds (LST)**, lists the Localized Significance Thresholds (LST) used to determine whether a project may generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts. LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that are not expected to cause or contribute to an exceedance of the most stringent

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. LSTs are developed based on the ambient concentrations of four applicable air pollutants for source receptor area (SRA) 28 – Hemet/San Jacinto Valley.

The nearest existing sensitive receptor is a single-family caretaker residence 732 feet to the northwest of the proposed development area. In addition, the maximum amount of land that would be graded in a day would be 2 acres. Therefore, the Project is assumed to grade 2 acres per day with the minimum distance to the nearest sensitive receptor to be 200 meters and the closest sensitive receptor to the site is actually 732 feet which is farther or more conservative than the 200-meter (656 feet) threshold. **Table 6-7, Localized Construction Emissions**, illustrates the construction related localized emissions and compares the results to SCAQMD LST thresholds.

**Table 6-6  
SCAQMD Localized Significance Thresholds<sup>1</sup> (LST)**

Pollutant	Construction (lbs./day)	Operational (lbs./day)
NO <sub>x</sub>	521.0	521.0
CO	6,399.0	6,399.0
PM <sub>10</sub>	75.0	18.0
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	23.0	6.0

<sup>1</sup> SCAQMD Mass Rate Localized Significance Thresholds for 2-acre site in SRA-28 at 200 meters.

**Table 6-7  
Localized Construction Emissions**

Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs./day) <sup>1</sup>				
Activity	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
On-site Emissions	87.04	78.17	30.40	17.29
SCAQMD Construction Threshold <sup>2</sup>	521.0	6,399.0	75.0	23.0
Exceeds Threshold (?)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

<sup>1</sup> Maximum daily emissions during summer or winter.

<sup>2</sup> Reference LST thresholds are from 2006-2008 SCAQMD Mass rate Localized Significant Thresholds for construction and operation. Source Receptor Area 28 (Hemet/San Jacinto Valley), 5-acre site, receptor distance 25 meters.

As shown in **Table 6-7**, the emissions will be below the SCAQMD thresholds of significance for localized construction emissions. The Project must follow all SCAQMD rules and requirements with regards to fugitive dust control, as well as other construction-related emissions. Implementation of these standard requirements is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA. Therefore, the Project's short-term construction impacts on localized air resources are less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Diesel Particulate Matter – Construction

The greatest potential for toxic air contaminant emissions from the Project would be related to diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions associated with heavy diesel equipment used during

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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construction. According to SCAQMD methodology, health effects from carcinogenic air toxics are usually described in terms of “individual cancer risk”. “Individual Cancer Risk” is the likelihood that a person exposed to concentrations of toxic air contaminants over a 30-year lifetime will contract cancer, based on the use of standard risk-assessment methodology.

As shown in **Table 6-5, Regional Construction Emissions**, and in **Table 6-7, Localized Construction Emissions**, construction-based particulate matter (PM) emissions (including diesel exhaust emissions) do not exceed regional or local thresholds. Given the short-term construction schedule, the proposed Project’s construction activity is not expected to be a long-term (i.e., 30 years) substantial source of toxic air contaminant emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk and a health risk assessment is not warranted.

In September 2000, the CARB adopted the Diesel Risk Reduction Plan, which recommends several control measures to reduce the risks associated with DPM. The key elements of the Plan are to clean up existing engines through engine retrofit emission control devices, to adopt stringent standards for new diesel engines, to lower the sulfur content of diesel fuel, and implement advanced technology emission control devices on diesel engines.

The Project must follow County standard conditions and applicable SCAQMD rules and requirements which will help minimize fugitive dust, DPM, and other construction-related emissions. Implementation of these standard requirements is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Asbestos - Construction

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that has been used commonly in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire-retardant. When asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed by repair, remodeling or demolition activities, microscopic fibers become airborne and can be inhaled into the lungs, where they can cause significant health problems. No structures are proposed to be demolished as part of the proposed Project.

Based on the California Division of Mines and Geology General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California - Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, naturally occurring asbestos, found in serpentine and ultramafic rock, has not been shown to occur within in the vicinity of the Project site. Therefore, the potential risk for naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) during Project construction is small. However, in the event NOA is found on the site, the Project will be required to comply with the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) standards. An Asbestos NESHAP Notification Form shall be completed and submitted to the CARB immediately upon discovery of the contaminant.

The Project site is vacant and contains no buildings so there is no potential for human-related asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) to be present. Therefore, any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Construction Traffic

Construction traffic is evaluated with regards to air pollutant emissions. Construction traffic is expected to be heaviest during the grading phase of the Project, but earthwork is expected to be balanced onsite (see Grading under the Project Description). As shown in **Table 6-5**, compliance



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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with County and SCAQMD requirements will reduce potential emissions associated with on-site and off-site construction traffic to below the applicable thresholds as set forth by the State of California and the SCAQMD.

Localized Operational Emissions

Project-related air emissions from on-site sources such as architectural coatings, landscaping equipment, on-site usage of natural gas (propane) appliances as well as the operation of vehicles on-site may have the potential to exceed the State and Federal air quality standards in the Project vicinity, even though these pollutant emissions may not be significant enough to create a regional impact to the Air Basin. The nearest sensitive receptor is 732 feet to the northwest of the proposed development area on the site.

According to SCAQMD LST methodology, LSTs would apply to the operational phase of a project if the Project includes stationary sources or attracts mobile sources such as heavy-duty trucks that may spend long periods queuing and idling at the site such as industrial warehouse/transfer facilities. The proposed Project is a low intensity “institutional” type use which does not include such on-site emissions sources, and due the lack of stationary source emissions, a long-term localized significance threshold analysis is not typically required for this type of development project. However, **Table 6-8, Localized Operational Emissions** shows the localized operational emissions and compares the results to SCAQMD LST thresholds of significance.

**Table 6-8  
Localized Operational Emissions**

Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs./day) <sup>1</sup>				
LST Pollutants	NOx	CO	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
On-site Emissions <sup>1</sup>	1.86	9.03	1.83	0.53
SCAQMD Operation Threshold <sup>2</sup>	521.0	6,399.0	18.0	6.0
Exceeds Threshold (?)	No	No	No	No

<sup>1</sup> Maximum daily emissions during summer or winter.

<sup>2</sup> Mobile source emissions include on-site vehicle emissions only (such as vehicle idling and circulating in the parking lot). It is estimated that approximately 5% of mobile emissions will occur on the Project site.

<sup>3</sup> Reference: 2006-2008 SCAQMD Mass Rate Localized Significant Thresholds for construction and operation Table C-1 through C-6; SRA 28, Hemet/San Jacinto Valley disturbance area of 2acres and receptor distance of 200 meters.

As shown in **Table 6-8**, emissions will be below the SCAQMD thresholds of significance for localized operational emissions. The Project will result in less than significant localized operational emissions impacts.

Health Impacts

The Project is not expected to generate significant levels of NOx that would persist over the life of the Project and exceed the maximum daily emissions limits set by SCAQMD. By exceeding the SCAQMD regional threshold, the impact is considered cumulatively significant and would contribute to ozone formation, a criteria pollutant for which SCAQMD is nonattainment. While the project would not solely result in the exceedance of an AAQS, potential adverse health impacts associated with increased exposure to pollutant concentrations may occur.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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NO<sub>x</sub> includes a group of highly reactive gases known as the oxides of nitrogen, and while all of these gases are harmful to human health and the environment, of the greatest concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). NO<sub>2</sub> is typically used as the indicator for the larger group of NO<sub>x</sub>.

Breathing air with a high concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> can irritate airways in the human respiratory system. Such exposures over short periods can aggravate respiratory diseases, particularly asthma, leading to respiratory symptoms (such as coughing, wheezing or difficulty breathing), hospital admissions and visits to emergency rooms. Longer exposures to elevated concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> may contribute to the development of asthma and potentially increase susceptibility to respiratory infections. People with asthma, as well as children and the elderly are generally at greater risk for the health effects of NO<sub>2</sub>. NO<sub>x</sub> also reacts with ammonia, moisture, and other compounds to form small particles that can penetrate deeply into sensitive parts of the lungs.

In addition, NO<sub>x</sub> reacts with volatile organic compounds to form ground-level ozone. Breathing ground-level ozone can result in a number of health effects that are observed in broad segments of the population. Some of these effects include induction of respiratory symptoms, decrements in lung function, and inflammation of airways. Respiratory symptoms from ozone exposure can include coughing, throat irritation, pain, burning, or discomfort in the chest when taking a deep breath, chest tightness, wheezing, or shortness of breath. In addition to these effects, evidence from observational studies strongly indicates that higher daily ozone concentrations are associated with increased asthma attacks, increased hospital admissions, increased daily mortality, and other markers of morbidity.

SCAQMD, as cited in the Brief of Amicus Curiae to the Supreme Court of California in the Friant Ranch Case, (April 6, 2015), states that, with regards to analysis of air quality related health impacts, EIRs must generally quantify a project's pollutant emissions, but in some cases, it is not feasible to correlate these emissions to specific, quantifiable health impacts (e.g., premature mortality; hospital emissions).

Therefore, given the current limitations of quantifying health risks from NO<sub>x</sub>, a quantifiable risk assessment has not been performed.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, with adherence to County standard conditions of approval and applicable SCAQMD Rules, the proposed Project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations either during construction or operation. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*d) Would the Project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

According to the CEQA Air Quality Handbook, land uses associated with odor complaints include agricultural operations, wastewater treatment plants, landfills, and certain industrial operations (such as manufacturing uses that produce chemicals, paper, etc.). Odors are typically associated with industrial projects involving the use of chemicals, solvents, petroleum products, and other

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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strong-smelling elements used in manufacturing processes, as well as sewage treatment facilities and landfills.

Heavy-duty equipment in the Project area during construction will emit odors; however, the construction activity would cease to occur after individual construction is completed. The Project is required to comply with Rule 402 during construction, which states that a person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property. Rule 402 shall be implemented as a standard condition and is not considered unique mitigation under CEQA. Any construction odors will be less than significant.

Land uses that commonly receive odor complaints include agricultural uses (farming and livestock), chemical plants, composting operations, dairies, fiberglass molding facilities, food processing plants, landfills, refineries, rail yards, and wastewater treatment plants. The Project is located within a rural community and any odors emitting agricultural activities would be limited and consistent with the surrounding uses and environment. The Project does not propose any land uses that would typically be associated with significant odor emissions.

The Project will be required to comply with standard building code requirements related to exhaust ventilation, as well as comply with SCAQMD Rule 402 which states that a person may not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property. Project related odors are not expected to meet the criteria of being a nuisance. Any operational impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** Would the Project:

**7. Wildlife & Vegetation**

a) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan?

b) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any endangered, or threatened species, as listed in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (Sections 670.2 or 670.5) or in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (Sections 17.11 or 17.12)?

c) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U. S. Wildlife Service?

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Preliminary Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, The Ridge Wellness, Inc., Mountain Center, prepared by Searl Biological, 12-17-2021 (MSHCP Analysis, Appendix C); and Ordinance No. 810.2 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Amending Ordinance No. 810 to Establish the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Mitigation Fee).*

**Note:** Any tables or figures in this section are from the *MSHCP Analysis* unless otherwise noted.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state conservation plan?*

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

The Project proposes to amend the site’s land use designation from Open Space: Rural (OS: RUR) to Open Space: Recreation (OS: R) and change its zoning classification of A-1-20 to Natural Assets (N-A). The Project proposes the operation of an eco-conscious private guest ranch on approximately 36 gross acres with guest cabins and guest tents, wellness cabins, wellness basecamp, activity hub and lap pool, dining area, health focused commercial kitchen, working greenhouse, apiary and fruit trees will contribute to a fully sustainable facility for guests to use and enjoy within the natural setting of the property. According to **Table 1** in this IS/MND, approximately 32.6 acres of the site (almost 90 percent) will remain as natural open space. The Project will retain all the natural vegetation and all the existing large pine trees on the site. The ranch will offer a variety of self-development therapies and recreational activities. Recreational activities available to the guests will include but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and water activities at Lake Hemet. In addition, guests will be able to participate in cultural and environmental educational activities as part of the experience at the ranch.

The Project site is located in Garner Valley in unincorporated Riverside County, approximately 3.5 miles southeast of Mountain Center and approximately 5.3 miles south of the town of Idyllwild. The

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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site address is 56475 Apple Canyon Road, east of the Pines to Palms Highway 74 (Hwy 74) and Apple Canyon Road intersection. The site is located immediately south of the County-operated Hurkey Creek Park and Hurkey Creek crosses the center portion of the Project site in a north-south direction.

The Project site supports a number of native and non-native vegetation associations, as shown in **Table 7-1, Local Vegetation** and **Figure 7-1, Local Vegetation**. Approximately 16.6 acres or 44 percent of the site is covered by disturbed land, bare ground or ruderal land (weedy with non-native grasses) and the remaining 21.4 acres or 56 percent of the site supports the following native plant associations:

- **Chaparral/Coastal Sage Scrub:** This community is present in the western portion of the Property and consisted primarily of a mix of pointleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pungens*) and Great Basin sage (*Artemisia tridentata*).
- **Coastal Sage Scrub/Ruderal:** This community is a mix of Great Basin sage and cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*). The understory consisted of dense non-native annual grasses and forbs with cheat grass dominant, and associate species. Species include both native plants as well as introduced non-native species.
- **Jeffrey Pine Woodland:** Jeffrey pine woodland consisted of areas where three or more Jeffrey pines were present with an interconnect canopy. This was present in the northern portion of the Property. Numerous Jeffrey pines were present throughout the Property but were scattered and typically occurred as a single tree or two trees. Also, numerous snag Jeffrey pines were also present and were more common near Hurkey Creek. The understory primarily consisted of bastard sage, Great Basin sage, cheat grass, and scarlet bugler.
- **Willow Riparian:** This riparian community was present along Hurkey Creek with arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), red willow (*Salix laevigata*), and arroyo/red willow hybrids dominant. Narrow-leaved willow (*Salix exigua*) is also common throughout this area. Much of the willow associated with the bed and bank of Hurkey Creek was in recovery due to recent storm flows that appeared to have washed out much of the perennial vegetation.

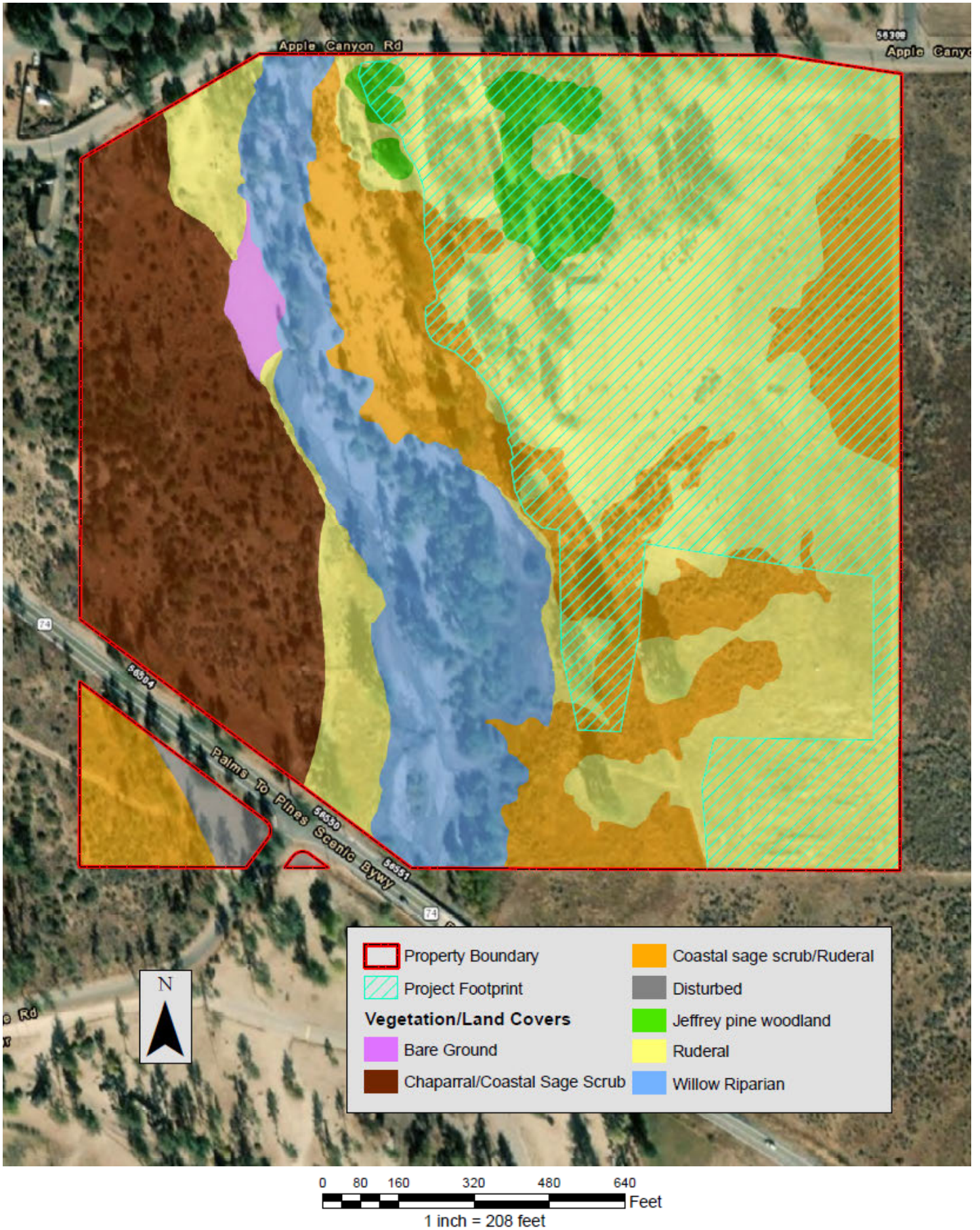
**Table 7-1  
Local Vegetation**

Vegetation/ Land Cover	Total Site	Disturbed by Project	Remaining Undisturbed
Ruderal/Disturbed <sup>1</sup>	16.62	11.70	4.92
Chaparral/Coastal Sage Scrub	6.41	0.00	6.41
Coastal Sage Scrub/Ruderal	8.34	3.21	5.13
Jeffrey Pine Woodland	1.11	1.00	0.11
Willow Riparian (Hurkey Creek)	5.49	0.00	5.49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37.97</b>	<b>15.91</b>	<b>22.06</b>
Percent	100%	41.90	58.10

<sup>1</sup> includes bare ground (see Figure 7-1)



**FIGURE 7-1  
Local Vegetation**



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The Project site is within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) which is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional Habitat Conservation Plan focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in Western Riverside County. An *MSHCP Analysis* was prepared to determine if the proposed Project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the MSHCP and what, if any, measures the Project would need to implement to achieve that consistency.

The site is located in the southeastern portion of the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP) which extends east outside the boundary of the MSHCP. However, the Project site is within the MSHCP boundary. The site is not located within any MSHCP Sub Unit or a Criteria Cell, and therefore, was not targeted for Additional Reserve Lands (ARL) within the MSHCP. Further, a Reserve Assembly Analysis was not required for the Project since Criteria Cell 5275 is the nearest to the Project site approximately 5.7 miles to the southwest. Regardless, the MSHCP does require the potential for any vernal pool or riparian/riverine area to also be evaluated, as well as any focused survey requirements. One onsite feature, Hurkey Creek, meets the criteria of an MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area, but the Project will avoid impacts to this area. Finally, the site is located within an assessment area for Native Endemic Plant Species (NEPS).

The following sub-sections discuss the portions/requirements of the MSHCP applicable to the proposed Project.

Covered Roads and Facilities

According to the MSHCP, the Project site and immediate surrounding area do not entail the construction of, or improvements to, a Covered Public Access Facility.

MSHCP Reserve Assembly Analysis

The MSHCP is a criteria-based plan developed by the County and resource agencies to protect listed, sensitive, or otherwise important biological species and their habitats within this portion of the County. A Conceptual Reserve Design was developed for each County Area Plan based on vegetation, species occurrence, and other criteria. Quarter-section “criteria cells” of 160 acres each were identified based on important resources. The cells were either aggregated into a Criteria Cell Group or retained as individual Criteria Cells based upon the level of conservation they provided. Criteria Cells have identification numbers, and each Criteria Cell Group has a letter code. The MSHCP identifies specific conservation criteria for each Criteria Cell or Criteria Cell Group to provide an explicit description of the areas to be targeted for conservation. Consistent with the MSHCP, the *MSHCP Analysis* determined that a Reserve Assembly Analysis was not needed because the site does not impact any Criteria Cells and thus no Additional Reserve Land (ARL) is involved. Therefore, the development portion of the Project site does not need to be preserved within the ARL to comply with the MSHCP. For additional information, see Section 3 of the *MSHCP Analysis*.

Public Quasi-Public (PQP) Lands

Though the Project is located immediately south and east of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land, it will not directly or indirectly impact those PQP Lands. The Project will avoid development in the western half of the Property, including Hurkey Creek, and the PQP Lands to the north include Hurkey Creek Park which is regularly used by people for camping and recreation.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Riparian/Riverine/Vernal Pool Resources (MSHCP Section 6.1.2)

This section of the MSHCP requires a habitat assessment for Riparian/Riverine Areas, Vernal Pools, three fairy shrimp species; 1) Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*) (RFS), 2) vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)(VPFS), and 3) Santa Rosa Plateau fairy shrimp (*Linderiella santarosae*)(SRPFS), and three bird species; 1) Least Bell’s Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*)(LBV), 2) Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (SWF), and 3) Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)(YBC). If the assessment identifies suitable habitat for any of the six-species associated with Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools listed above, and the proposed project design does not incorporate avoidance of the identified habitat, focused surveys are required, and avoidance and minimization measures must be implemented in accordance with the MSHCP’s species-specific objectives for these species.

**Riparian/Riverine Resources.** The *MSHCP Analysis* determined that only one onsite feature, Hurkey Creek, meets the criteria of a Riparian/Riverine Area. The channel contains 8.09 acres of land within the “bed and banks” of the creek, 5.49 acres of riparian habitat with its associated tree canopy, and 0.79 acres within the “Ordinary High Water Mark” (OHWM) of the creek. Hurkey Creek is a large, perennial tributary that discharges into Lake Hemet to the southwest. The creek’s headwaters are located approximately 5.5 miles north of the site near Tahquitz Peak. In 2019, the west-facing slope of the San Jacinto Mountains experienced high volume rain events and the resulting flows caused closure of Hwy 74 for over a year. These flows caused the onsite bed and bank to extend all the way to its 100-year floodplain limits. The creek flows from north to south across the western-central portion of the site. It enters the site via an at-grade “Arizona” crossing on Apple Canyon Road and exits the site before flowing under a bridge at Hwy 74. The riparian community associated with the creek consisted of various species of willow and is shown in **Figure 7-2, Hurkey Creek Riparian/Riverine Limits**. The creek provides suitable habitat for all three MSHCP-listed bird species; LBV, SWF, and YBC. The Project proposes to avoid any impacts to this riparian/riverine feature on the site so any direct impacts to these species will be avoided. To permanently protect this habitat area and the species it supports or may support in the future, **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1** is required.

The *MSHCP Analysis* indicated that, if impacts could occur to Hurkey Creek, then focused surveys for LBV, SWF, and YBC should be conducted. The Project proposes to preserve Hurkey Creek so no focused surveys are necessary. However, to preclude any indirect impacts to these species during construction, **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-5** (nesting bird survey) will be modified to preclude construction within 300 feet of the riparian area during the nesting season for these species (April-August).

**Vernal Pools.** These areas are depressions where a hard-underground layer prevents rainwater from draining downward into the subsoils. When rain fills the pools in the winter and spring, the water collects and remains in the depressions. In the springtime, the water gradually evaporates away, until the pools become completely dry in the summer and fall. Vernal pools tend to have an impermeable layer that results in ponded water. The soil texture (i.e., the amount of sand, silt, and clay particles) typically contains higher amounts of fine silts and clays with lower percolation rates. Pools that retain water for a sufficient length of time will develop hydric cells. Hydric cells form when the soil is saturated from flooding for extended periods of time and anaerobic conditions (i.e., lacking oxygen or air) develop. The *MSHCP Analysis* reported that none of these conditions (i.e., no depressions, hydric soils, etc.) were observed on the site and all soils are mapped as sandy/loams



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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that do not retain water. Therefore, no impacts will occur due to the lack of these resources on the Project site.

**Fairy Shrimp.** In areas with stock ponds, ephemeral pools, and other water features are present, the MSHCP requires an assessment of potential habitat for Riverside, vernal pools, and Santa Rosa fairy shrimp. The *MSHCP Analysis* found no suitable habitat for fairy shrimp on the Project site (i.e., similar to the vernal pool assessment, no features were detected that would support fairy shrimp). The onsite soils consist entirely of sandy loams, and no evidence of seasonal ponding was detected. Fairy shrimp require seasonal ponding to complete their life cycle, so these areas do not provide suitable fairy shrimp habitat.

**Riparian Birds.** The *MSHCP Analysis* included an assessment of suitable habitat for least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo to determine if these riparian bird species were present on the site. Hurkey Creek was determined to contain 5.49 acres of suitable habitat for these species. However, the *MSHCP Analysis* concluded the Project would have no impacts on riparian birds since the entire onsite drainage will be avoided and have permanent protection under the recommended **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1**.

The *MSHCP Analysis* indicated that, if impacts could occur to Hurkey Creek, then focused surveys for LBV, SWF, and YBC should be conducted. The Project proposes to preserve Hurkey Creek, so no focused surveys are necessary. However, to preclude any indirect impacts to these species during construction, **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-5** (nesting bird survey) has been expanded to preclude construction within 300 feet of the riparian area during the nesting season for these species (April-August).

Protection of Narrow Endemic Plant Species (NEPS)(MSHCP Section 6.1.3)

The MSHCP specifically covers 63 rare plant species through the implementation of the species-specific objectives outlined by the MSHCP. The NEPS are those species that information regarding the distribution and presence throughout western Riverside County was considered insufficient to ensure their long-term conservation. Therefore, the MSHCP established 10 NEPS "survey areas" based on historic records, soils, and habitats where these 14-plant species could potentially occur. All public and private projects located within any of these survey areas must, in the least, conduct a habitat assessment. If suitable habitat is determined to be present, then focused surveys must be performed.

The entire Project site is located in NEPS Assessment Area No. 6, which targets three NEPS as described in **Table 7-2, Narrow Endemic Plant Assessment**. The site was determined to have structurally suitable habitat and warranted the need for focused surveys for the three targeted NEPS; Johnston's rockcress was not detected on or near the Project site; Munz's mariposa-lily was detected offsite near the southwest portion of the site; and San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw was detected in the northern and western portions of the site. **Figure 7-3, NEPS Assessment Results**, shows the detection locations. More information about Munz's mariposa-lily and San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw is provided below:

*Munz's mariposa-lily* was detected offsite in the middle of a dirt road/trail (a total of 13 plants). More of the plants were also observed offsite to the northwest of the site.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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*San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw* was detected at three onsite locations. The majority of the 97 plants were present at two locations in the western portion of the site (i.e., west of Hurkey Creek). Both of these areas (total 6.42 acres) have granitic soil with scattered granite boulders and chaparral vegetation that represents long-term suitable habitat for the species. The third location was approximately 16 square feet along the northern property boundary near a recent active flow area of Hurkey Creek and bounded on the north by Apple Canyon Road. Only seven plants were detected at this location which the *MSHCP Analysis* determined does not represent long-term suitable habitat for the species.

**Table 7-2  
Narrow Endemic Plant Assessment**

Species	Regulatory Status <sup>1</sup>	Soils and Habitat	Blooming Period	Notes
Johnston's rockcress ( <i>Boechea johnstonii</i> )	NFSS CRPR 1B.2	Rocky areas, gravelly soils. Often on eroded clay. Chaparral and lower montane coniferous forest.	Mainly February to March but can bloom through June	Can occur with Munz's mariposa lily
Munz's mariposa-lily ( <i>Calochortus palmeri</i> var. <i>munzii</i> )	NFSS CRPR 1B.2	Fine granitic loam and sandy clay. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, yellow- pine woodlands.	April to July	Can occur in both wetland and uplands
San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw ( <i>Galium angustifolium</i> subsp. <i>jacinticum</i> )	NFSS CRPR 1B.3	No known soil associations. Chaparral and lower montane coniferous forest.	May to August	Often growing at the base of chaparral/sage scrub shrubs.

<sup>1</sup> NFSS = No federal or state listing status

California Rare Plant Ranking (CRPR)

1B - Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere  
Threat Rank

0.2-Fairly threatened in California (moderate degree/immediacy of threat)

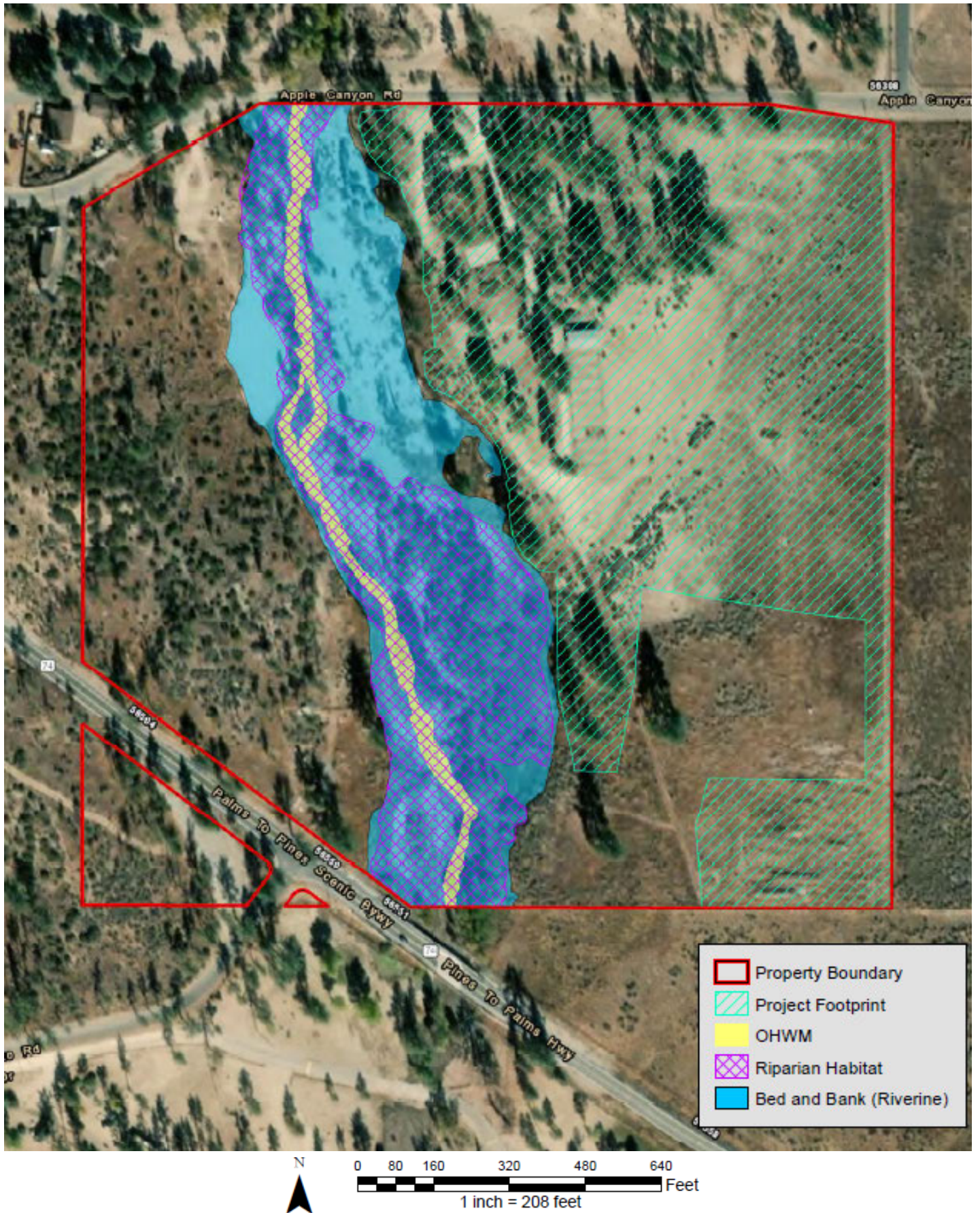
0.3-Not very threatened in California (low degree/immediacy of threats or no current threats known)

The *MSHCP Analysis* indicated that Project construction will impact only the very small area along Apple Canyon Road where seven San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw plants were detected. It indicated the chaparral habitat in the western portion of the site provided long-term conservation value for the plant. The area identified provides 6.42-acres of habitat that is directly connected to the PQP Lands of the USFS to the west. To preclude impacts to this species, this habitat area should be protected/preserved with no human activities allowed.

To provide this protection, **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1** will place a "no impact/avoidance area" deed restriction over this area so it can provide long-term conservation value habitat for San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw plants. With implementation of the deed restriction, the Project is consistent with MSHCP Section 6.1.3.

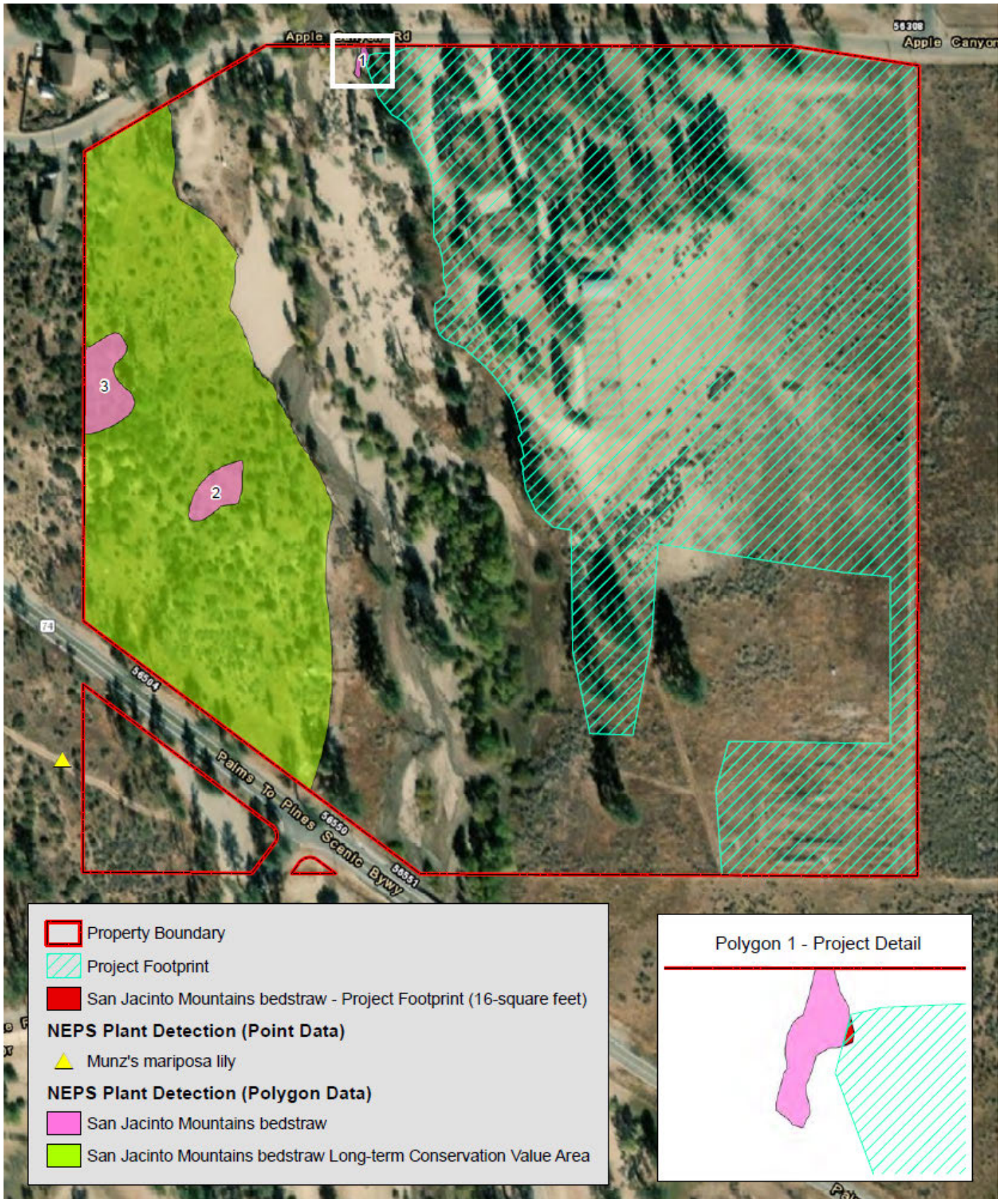


**FIGURE 7-2**  
**Hurkey Creek Riparian/Riverine Limits**



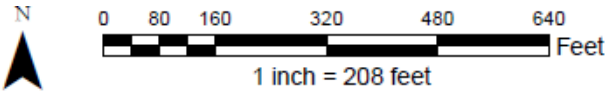


**FIGURE 7-3  
NEPS Assessment Results**



Property Boundary  
 Project Footprint  
 San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw - Project Footprint (16-square feet)  
**NEPS Plant Detection (Point Data)**  
▲ Munz's mariposa lily  
**NEPS Plant Detection (Polygon Data)**  
 San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw  
 San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw Long-term Conservation Value Area

Polygon 1 - Project Detail



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Urban/Wildlands Interface (MSHCP Section 6.1.4)

The MSHCP recommends guidelines to minimize potential “edge effects” resulting from locating development projects near an MSHCP Reserve Assembly or MSHCP conserved resources. Measures, such as buffers and/or barriers, are typically put in place to control drainage, toxics, lighting, noise, and invasives (Invasives are plants that are both non-native and able to establish on many sites, grow quickly, and spread to the point of disrupting plant communities or ecosystems). The following 6.1.4 Guidelines will be implemented to minimize edge effects to Hurkey Creek and nearby PQP Lands.

- Drainage: The Project will implement the applicable BMPs described below in Section 10.0. Any runoff originating from the Site after Project completion will be diverted and collected in three proposed bioretention basins thus preventing any low-flow, untreated water from entering Hurkey Creek. The site plan (Appendix A of the *MSHCP Analysis*) details the design and connectivity of the three basins. Additionally, the functionality of the three basins is detailed further in the applicant’s Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP).
- Toxics: The Project is not proposing the production of potential Toxics; however, the Project will implement the applicable runoff BMPs described below.
- Lighting: Any Project lighting installed near the Development/Hurkey Creek boundary shall be shielded or directed to not shine directly into the MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area.
- Noise: The Project is not expected to produce any amount of noise that would be considered an impact to wildlife utilizing the MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area.
- Invasives: Any Project landscaping should avoid those listed in Table 6-2 of the MSHCP which is also provided in Appendix F of the *MSHCP Analysis*. Further, the Project should be landscaped with the appropriate native species using the existing native plants as a baseline for the plant palette (e.g., Jeffrey pine, Great Basin sage, scarlet bugler, etc.).
- Barriers: According to the site plan attached in Appendix A of the *MSHCP Analysis*, the Project is proposing a retaining wall at three locations near, but outside, of the MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area to eliminate the need for additional grading. The remaining areas along Hurkey Creek will remain open without fencing to not impede or interfere with wildlife movement or use of the area; therefore, signs will be installed informing patrons that the creek is an “Environmentally Sensitive Area” and “Do Not Enter.” (See **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-2**). The habitat of Hurkey Creek could serve as an educational opportunity for patrons of the future Guest Ranch through passive, unobtrusive use such as kiosks with information on the flora and fauna present, bird watching, etc.
- Grading/Land Development: No grading or land development will extend into the MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area. Additionally, fuel modification/weed abatement activities are not permitted in designated avoidance areas. BMPs, such as orange construction fencing, will be used to clearly define the Project footprint area and will be confirmed by a qualified biological monitor prior to and during construction/grading activities (see **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-3**).

With implementation of these recommended mitigation measures and the Project as designed, potential impacts related to edge effects and urban/wildlands interface will be reduced to less than significant levels.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Additional Survey Needs and Procedures (MSHCP Section 6.3.2)

**Amphibians.** The MSHCP covers 146 species of plants and animals of which 40 species have specific survey requirements. The Property was not located within a designated assessment area for Criteria Area Plant Species (CAPS). However, the entire Property was located within a MSHCP-designated assessment area for Southern Mountain Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana muscosa*)(RAMU).

Hurkey Creek was perennial and so was determined to support structurally suitable habitat for RAMU. However, the habitat was of low suitability due to the long-standing anthropogenic uses of the area such as cattle grazing/rangelands, agriculture, major roadways, campgrounds/recreation, and Lake Hemet. The *MSHCP Analysis* determined the creek contained 1.15 acres of suitable but low quality RAMU habitat. Three focused surveys were performed and RAMU was not detected in any of the surveys. It should be noted that Hurkey Creek within the boundaries of the Project site will be preserved, and no construction or operational activities will be allowed within the bed and bank area of the creek. Therefore, the Project will have no impacts on RAMU, and no mitigation is required.

**Burrowing Owl.** The Project site is not located within a designated assessment area for Burrowing Owl, so there will be no impact and no mitigation is required.

**Mammals.** The Project site was not located within a designated assessment area for Mammals, so there will be no impact and no mitigation is required.

Information on Other Species

**Delhi Sands Flower Loving Fly.** The Project site is not located within an area with Delhi sands, so there will be no impact and no mitigation is required.

**Species Not Adequately Conserved.** MSHCP *Table 9-3 Requirements to be Met for 28 Species Prior to Including Those Species on the List of Covered Species Adequately Conserved* is a list of “28 Covered Species [that] will be considered to be adequately conserved when certain conservation requirements are met as identified in the species-specific conservation objectives for those species.”

Beautiful Hulsea

The *MSHCP Analysis* detected approximately 150 beautiful hulsea (*Hulsea vestita* subsp. *callicarpha*) in the northern portion of the Project site during the NEPS focused survey previously described. This plant primarily occurred in the understory of Jeffrey pine woodland on sandy/loam soils with a few small granitic boulders exposed at ground level. The Project could impact a portion of the population on the site based on the Project’s proposed development area. However, according to the RCA’s *Status of Covered Species Not Adequately Conserved (Table 9-3 Species)* table, the following Species-Specific Conservation Objective has been met:

*In order for this species to become a Covered Species Adequately Conserved, the following conservation must be demonstrated: Within the MSHCP Conservation Area, confirm 16 localities (locality in this sense is not smaller than one quarter section) with no fewer than 50 individuals each (unless a smaller population has been demonstrated to be self-sustaining).*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Therefore, beautiful hulsea is considered adequately covered by the MSHCP and the Project is consistent with the objectives for this covered species of the MSHCP.

Additional Regulatory-Status Species Requiring Special Consideration

Three additional rare plant species not covered by the MSHCP were detected over the course of spring and summer surveys and the Project will avoid impacts to two out of the three: golden-rayed pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta aurea* subsp. *aurea*) and white-margined oxytheca (*Sidotheca emarginata*). There will be no impacts because they are located in the western portion of the site that will be preserved as open space.

The third species, chaparral sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa* var. *aurita*), will be impacted by the Project. To reduce this impact, seeds will need to be collected and dispersed within suitable habitat areas on the Property that will be avoided by Project construction and operation. A monitoring plan will also need to be implemented for three years to re-establish a viable population on the site. These actions are incorporated into **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-4**. With implementation of that measure, potential impacts to the chaparral sand verbena will be reduced to a less than significant level under CEQA.

Nesting Birds

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) created the following:

*“Establishment of a Federal prohibition, unless permitted by regulations, to “pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention . . . for the protection of migratory birds . . . or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird.”*

Further, the California Fish and Game Code (CFGF) states the following:

CFGF 3503: *“It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.”*

CFGF 3503.5: *“It is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto.”*

If Project construction activities occur during the established bird nesting season (i.e., January 1 – August 31 for raptors and hummingbirds; February 1 – August 31 for all other birds), then a pre-construction nesting bird survey must be conducted prior to and within three days of construction activities. The biologist shall have the authority to establish no disturbance buffers with the distances determined by factors such as species, tolerance of disturbance, nest status, etc. If nesting bird surveys result in the need for a biological monitor to be present during construction activities, then one shall be present full-time to monitor construction activities to ensure no direct or indirect impacts occur to potential nest success. The biologist shall have the authority to suspend construction activities if potential impacts are observed. These actions are incorporated into **Mitigation Measure**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**MM-BIO-5.** With its implementation, potential impacts to nesting birds will be reduced to less than significant levels.

MSHCP Conservation Goals

In addition to evaluating various specific MSHCP requirements (see above), the *MSHCP Analysis* evaluated the underlying designation of the Project site and surrounding area to meet the overall conservation goals and structure of the MSHCP. However, the Project site is not located within an MSHCP Sub Unit so the Project does not need to comply with any MSHCP Conservation Goals.

MSHCP Mitigation Fee

Section 6 of the MSHCP requires:

*“Payment of the mitigation fee and compliance with the requirements of Section 6.0 are intended to provide full mitigation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Endangered Species Act, and California Endangered Species Act for impacts to the species and habitats covered by the MSHCP pursuant to agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or any other appropriate participating regulatory agencies and as set forth in the Implementing Agreement for the MSHCP.”*

The MSHCP Mitigation Fee has been established to provide mitigation for biological impacts from projects within the MSHCP area. This is not considered unique mitigation under CEQA.

**Summary of Impacts.** In conclusion, the proposed Project is consistent with all applicable sections of the MSHCP. Adherence to standard conditions and implementation of **Mitigation Measures MM-BIO-1** through **MM-BIO-5** will ensure both short- and long-term consistency with the MSHCP. Thus, the proposed Project will not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan (i.e., impacts are less than significant with mitigation).

*b) Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any endangered, or threatened species, as listed in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (Sections 670.2 or 670.5) or in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (Sections 17.11 or 17.12)?*

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

The *MSHCP Analysis* evaluated all of the listed and sensitive species of plants and animals covered by the MSHCP that could potentially be impacted by the proposed Project as discussed in Threshold 7.a. While some of these species have been observed in the surrounding area in the past, the Project site does not contain or support any of these species due to its historical and ongoing level of disturbance and human activity.

In addition to species covered by the MSHCP, nesting bird species are protected by California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5 and by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (16 USC 703-711), which make it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any migratory bird or bird of prey. The MBTA created the following:



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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*“Establishment of a Federal prohibition, unless permitted by regulations, to “pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention . . . for the protection of migratory birds . . . or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird.” Further, the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) states the following: CFGC 3503: “It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.” CFGC 3503.5: “It is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto.”*

The Project site, and areas in the immediate vicinity, contains trees, shrubs, and grasslands that provide suitable nesting habitat for a number of migratory bird species known to nest in the Project area. Impacts to nesting bird species must be avoided at all times. The period from approximately January 1 to August 31 is the expected breeding season for bird species occurring in the Project area. Under **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-4**, if Project activity or vegetation removal must be initiated during the breeding season, a qualified biologist will check for nesting birds within three days prior to such activity. If active bird nests are found, avoidance buffers will need to be established and observed. With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-5** impacts to nesting birds will be less than significant.

In summary, implementation of the proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any endangered or threatened species as discussed in Threshold 7.a. above and the following Thresholds 7.c., 7.d, and 7.e. With the incorporation of **Mitigation Measures MM-BIO-1** through **MM-BIO-5**, potential impacts to listed species will be reduced to less than significant levels. The Project will be required to pay applicable MSHCP Mitigation Fees pursuant to Ordinance No. 810.2. These are standard fees and are not considered unique mitigation under CEQA. Any impacts will be reduced to less than significant levels.

c) *Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U. S. Wildlife Service?*

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

Discussion is referenced in Threshold 7.a, 7.d, 7.e., and 7.f. Based on this data, the Project will not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Wildlife Service. Mitigation related to nesting birds (**MM-BIO-5**), as well as standard conditions for payments of the applicable MSHCP fee will ensure all impacts remain at less than significant levels.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- d) *Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**

Under the MSHCP, the proposed Project or surrounding area do not contain any Cores or Constrained Linkages. In addition, preserving the Hurkey Creek drainage onsite will help protect any wildlife movement that does occur through this area. Based on the results of the *MSHCP Analysis*, the site contains no native wildlife nursery sites, and the site itself is not identified as being part of or functions as a migratory wildlife corridor for any fish or wildlife species.

As discussed in Threshold 7.b, nesting bird species are protected by California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5 and by the MBTA of 1918 (16 USC 703-711), which makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any migratory bird or bird of prey. A number of resident and migratory birds utilize the general Project area that contains trees, shrubs, and grasslands that may provide potential suitable nesting habitat for migratory bird species.

Impacts to nesting bird species must be avoided at all times. The period from approximately January 1 to August 31 is the expected breeding season for bird species occurring in the Project area, including raptors. Under **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-5**, if Project activity or vegetation removal is initiated during the breeding season, a qualified biologist should check for nesting birds within three days prior to such activity. With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-5**, potential impacts to nesting birds will be less than significant.

- e) *Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As discussed in Threshold 7.a, the *MSHCP Analysis* determined that only one onsite feature, Hurkey Creek, meets the criteria of a Riparian/Riverine Area. The channel contains 8.09 acres of land within the “bed and banks” of the creek, 5.49 acres of riparian habitat with its associated tree canopy, and 0.79 acres within the OHWM of the creek. Hurkey Creek is a large, perennial tributary that discharges into Lake Hemet to the southwest. The creek’s headwaters are located approximately 5.5 miles north of the site near Tahquitz Peak. In 2019, the west-facing slope of the San Jacinto Mountains experienced high volume rain events and the resulting flows caused closure of Hwy 74 for over a year. These flows caused the onsite bed and bank to extend all the way to its 100-year floodplain limits.

The creek flows from north to south across the western-central portion of the site. It enters the site via an at-grade “Arizona” crossing on Apple Canyon Road and exits the site before flowing under a bridge at Hwy 74. The riparian community associated with the creek consisted of various species of willow and is shown in the previous **Figure 7-2**. The creek provides suitable habitat for all three MSHCP-listed bird species; LBV, SWF, and YBC. The Project proposes to set aside the creek as permanent open space so this riparian/riverine feature so there will be no direct impacts on these species. To permanently protect this habitat area and the species it supports or may support in the

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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future, **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1** is recommended. The *MSHCP Analysis* also determined the site contained no wetland or vernal pool habitat.

With the proposed preservation of Hurkey Creek, the Project will not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations of the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

f) *Would the Project 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?*

**No Impact**

The *MSHCP Analysis* found that the Project site contains no habitat meeting the criteria of a wetlands or vernal pool. Therefore, no impacts to vernal pools will occur with Project implementation. In addition, no suitable habitat for fairy shrimp was detected on the Project site. Therefore, the Project will not 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. No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

g) *Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project site contains dozens of native Jeffrey pine trees, but the Project as designed will not require the removal of onsite trees.

The provisions of County Ordinance No. 559 would not apply since the Project site is not above 5,000 feet in elevation. No other tree preservation or other local policy or ordinance relative to biological resources apply to the Project site.

Therefore, the proposed Project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Impacts will be less than significant with the implementation of the Project as proposed.

**Mitigation Measures:**

The following measures were identified during the discussion of Project impacts on biological resources under Thresholds 7.a through 7.g.

**MM-BIO-1 Deed Restricted Areas.** Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall place a “no impact/avoidance area” deed restriction over the following two areas on the site that were identified in the *MSHCP Analysis Report* dated 12/17/21 or any subsequent approved report:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- (a) MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian/Riverine Area. The 5.49 acres of Hurkey Creek identified in the MSHCP Report as riparian/riverine habitat shall be preserved/protected.
- (b) MSHCP Section 6.1.3 Narrow Endemic Plant Species. The 6.42 acres of onsite habitat for the San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw located west of Hurkey Creek, as outlined in the MSHCP Report, shall be preserved preserved/protected.

The deed restriction will demonstrate that these areas will be avoided, and no impacts will occur to them from clearing, grading, construction, development, or any ongoing operation of the proposed Project. The deed restriction will be finalized as a condition of Project approval by the County. The deed restriction shall not preclude necessary maintenance, repair, or restoration due to emergency or natural conditions that degrade the biological value of these areas. Any maintenance activities in these areas will be at the discretion of the County Planning Department in consultation with the Riverside Conservation Authority.

**MM-BIO-2 Signage.** Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the Project applicant shall install signs along the east bank of Hurkey Creek every 200 feet informing patrons that the creek is an “Environmentally Sensitive Area” and “Do Not Enter.” This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Planning Department.

**MM-BIO-3 Biological Monitor.** Prior to the start of any Project construction, the applicant shall retain a qualified biological consultant to monitor all activities. The Project Biologist shall monitor construction activities for the duration of the project to ensure that practicable measures are being employed to avoid incidental disturbance of habitat and species of concern outside the Project footprint. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Planning Department in consultation with the Riverside Conservation Authority.

**MM-BIO-4 Chaparral Sand-Verbena Protection.** Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a qualified botanist shall be retained to collect seeds of the chaparral sand-verbena and disperse them into suitable habitat areas on the site that will not be subject to Project construction or operation. A three-year monitoring plan shall be developed and implemented to re-establish a long-term viable population of the species on the site. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Planning Department in consultation with the Riverside Conservation Authority and other botanical experts as appropriate. All costs of this program, including any necessary consultation, will be funded completely by the Project applicant/operator.

**MM-BIO-5 Nesting Bird Survey.** If Project-related grading or construction occurs during the nesting season (i.e., January 1 – August 31 for raptors and hummingbirds; February 1 – August 31 for all other birds), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within a maximum of three (3) days prior to the start of onsite equipment mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, or grading, whichever occurs first. This survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist holding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Riverside County. The findings shall be submitted to the County of Riverside Planning Department for review and

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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approval prior to issuance of any ground disturbing activity.

Surveys shall be conducted in proposed work areas, staging and storage areas, and soil, equipment, and material stockpile areas. For passerines and small raptors, surveys shall be conducted within a 250-foot radius surrounding the work area (in areas where access is feasible). For larger raptors, the survey area shall encompass a 500-foot radius. Surveys shall be conducted during weather conditions suited to maximize the observation of possible nests and shall concentrate on areas of suitable habitat. If a lapse in project-related work of five (5) days or longer occurs, an additional nest survey shall be required before work can be reinitiated. If nests are encountered during any preconstruction survey, a qualified biologist shall determine if it may be feasible for construction to continue as planned without impacting the success of the nest, depending on conditions specific to each nest and the relative location and rate of construction activities.

If the qualified biologist determines construction activities have potential to adversely affect a nest, the biologist shall immediately inform the construction manager to halt construction activities within minimum exclusion buffer of 50 feet for songbird nests, and 200 to 500 feet for raptor nests, depending on species and location. Active nest(s) within the Project site shall be monitored by a qualified biologist during construction if work is occurring directly adjacent to the established no-work buffer. Construction activities within the no-work buffer may proceed after a qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active due to natural causes (e.g., young have fledged, predation, or other non-human causes of nest failure).

If nesting bird surveys result in the need for a biological monitor to be present during construction activities, then one shall be present full-time to monitor construction activities to ensure no direct or indirect impacts occur to potential nest success. The biologist shall have the authority to suspend construction activities if potential impacts are observed.

In addition, the Project proposes to preserve Hurkey Creek so no focused surveys for Least Bell’s Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, or Yellow-Bellied Cuckoo are necessary. However, construction within 300 feet of the riparian area will be precluded during the nesting season for these species (April-August) to preclude any indirect impacts to these species.

**Monitoring:** Provide results of nesting bird survey to County of Riverside for review and approval.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES** Would the Project:

<b>8. Historic Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Alter or destroy a historic site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of Conditional Use Permit No. 210121, prepared by Jean Keller, 12-2021 (CRA, **Appendix D**); Public Resources Code (PRC) §5020.1(j); and 14 California Code of Regulations §15064.5(a)(1)-(3).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project alter or destroy a historic site?*

***Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated***

A complete Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment (CRA) was performed on the entire Project site by Jean Keller, Ph.D. in December 2021. The CRA included a Sacred Lands file search through the Native American Heritage Commission, an archival records search, and two pedestrian walkovers of the site by a qualified archaeologist. The CRA included a review of an archaeological records search at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) at the University of California at Riverside in order to assess previous archaeological studies and identify any previously recorded sites within the Project boundaries, or in the immediate vicinity. The EIC records search indicated that 24 previous cultural resource studies have been conducted within one mile of the Project in the past, including five involving portions of the Project site. Eleven sites are of pre-contact (i.e., Native American origin before contact with European explorers or historic (Native American), eleven are of post-contact origin, and two are comprised of both Native American and post-contact “historical” components. The predominant cultural resources recorded at the Native American sites are bedrock milling features related to seasonal resource procurement and processing. Post-contact or “historical-era” cultural resources are primarily associated with State Route 74 and associated roadway features, as well as two large campground facilities located immediately north of the Project site (Hurkey Creek Campground and Park).

In 2008-09, an archaeological survey conducted for the Hurkey Creek Bridge Replacement Project (RI-10453) discovered and recorded a multi-component site containing both pre- and post-contact resources designated as CA-RIV-9236H. A portion of this resource site is located near but not on the southwestern corner of the Project property, both north and south of SR 74. The pre-contact component of this resource site comprised of a total of five bedrock milling features, two to the north and three to the south of SR 74, containing a total of eight mortars. Dark ashy colored soil that potentially represented the presence of a subsurface cultural deposit, a tightly clustered quartzite lithic scatter with a quartzite core, and two rogue pieces of milky quartz debris were also recorded. No formal pre-contact artifacts were observed but the post-contact “historical” component contained a small cluster of metal can fragments, amethyst-colored and cobalt-colored glass, and pieces of white glazeware. An updated Department of Parks and Recreation form for CA-RIV-9236/H was prepared and submitted to the EIC (see **Appendix D**).

According to the State CEQA Guidelines, a resource that meets one or most listing criteria of the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) can be considered historically significant. A resource may be listed in the CRHR if it meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California history and cultural heritage.
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- (3) Embodies the distinctive character of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
- (4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

After a detailed review of all onsite facilities and resources by an archaeologist, the CRA determined that all the post-contact “historic-period” sites and related materials do not meet any of the four

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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CRHR criteria and thus do not meet CEQA’s definition of “historical resources”. Therefore, potential Project impacts on these resources will not constitute “a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource” or “a significant effect on the environment” (PRC §21084.1).

Development of the site under the Project proposes to leave the entire onsite portion of Hurkey Creek and the onsite land west of the creek to Highway 74 at permanent open space. Due to the presence of biological resources, Section 7.a of this Initial Study recommended **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1** which will place the creek and the onsite lands to the west in a permanent “no impact/avoidance area” deed restriction prior to any grading on the site (i.e., east of the creek). Therefore, the portions of the site that also contain cultural resources will be permanently preserved as open space by implementation of this measure. Therefore, potential impacts to historical resources will be less than significant and no additional mitigation is required (i.e., other than **MM-BIO-1**).

After a detailed review of all onsite facilities and resources, the CRA determined that all the historic-period sites and related materials do not meet any of the four CRHR criteria and thus do not meet CEQA’s definition of “historical resources”. Therefore, potential Project impacts on these resources will not constitute “a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource” or “a significant effect on the environment” (PRC §21084.1). Therefore, any impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

*b) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5?*

**Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

According to Public Resources Code (PRC) §5020.1(j), “‘historical resource’ includes, but is not limited to, any object, building, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.”

More specifically, the State CEQA Guidelines state that the term “historical resources” applies to any such resources listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, included in a local register of historical resources, or determined to be historically significant by the lead agency (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(1)-(3)). Regarding the proper criteria for the evaluation of historical significance, the State CEQA Guidelines mandate that “generally a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be ‘historically significant’ if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources” (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(3)). A resource may be listed in the California Register if it meets any of the four criteria previously outlined in Threshold 8.a.

As outlined in Threshold 8.a, the cultural resources identified within or adjacent to the “Project area” as defined in the CRA do not satisfy any of the criteria for a historic resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines. In addition, the Project site itself is not listed with the State Office of Historic Preservation or the National Register of Historic Places.

However, based on input provided by the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, the Soboba Band of Mission Indians, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians regarding general prehistorical events in the area, there is a potential for unanticipated cultural resources at this site. Based on this

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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possibility and the prehistoric sensitivity of the area, and to ensure impacts to potential unanticipated resources, monitoring during grading will be performed. With adherence to conditions of approval, the Project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5. Any impacts will be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

**Mitigation:** See MM-BIO-1.

**Monitoring:** Provide Deed Restriction.

9. Archaeological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Alter or destroy an archaeological site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of Conditional Use Permit No. 210121, prepared by Jean Keller, 12-2021 (CRA, **Appendix D**); Public Resources Code (PRC) §5020.1(j); Health and Safety Code § 7050.5; and 14 California Code of Regulations §15064.5(a)(1)-(3).

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project alter or destroy an archaeological site?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

As documented in the CRA, the Native American Heritage Commission determined the Sacred Lands File search results were negative. Responses to Project scoping letters were received from the Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation and from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. The Quechan Historic Preservation Office stated that they have no comments on the project and defers to more local Tribes, supporting their decisions. According to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI), the Project area is not located within the boundaries of their reservation, but it is within the Tribe’s Traditional Use Area. For this reason, they requested the following:

- A cultural resources inventory of the project area be conducted by a qualified archaeologist prior to any development activities in the area;
- A copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the information center; and
- Copies of cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection with this Project.

In addition, the ACBCI requested the presence of an approved Cultural Resource Monitor(s) during any ground disturbing activities including archaeological testing and surveys (see “Standard Conditions of Approval” or COAs below). Should buried cultural deposits be encountered, the Monitor may request that destructive construction halt and the Monitor shall notify a Qualified Archaeologist (Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines) to investigate and, if necessary,



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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prepare a mitigation plan for submission to the State Historic Preservation Office. No information has been obtained through Native American consultation that the subject property is culturally or spiritually significant and no Traditional Cultural Properties that currently serve religious or other community practices are known to exist within the project boundaries. During the current cultural resources evaluation, no artifacts or remains were identified or recovered that could be reasonably associated with such practices.

Five cultural resources of pre-contact (i.e., Native American) origin were identified during the *CRA* field survey which were all comprised of bedrock milling features. Two previously recorded resource locations (CA-RIV-9236H Features 4 & 5) are in the southwestern corner of the Project site that is designated as permanent open space under the Project plan. Feature 4 is comprised of one conical mortar and one saucer mortar, while Feature 5 is comprised of one saucer mortar. Features 1 and 2 of CA-RIV-9236H were originally recorded in 2009 as being located near the southwestern corner of the Project site in an open space. However, the resource site record is problematic in that feature descriptions and locations are inconsistent. The *CRA* concluded the current field survey located what is actually Feature 2 (but was recorded as Feature 1) but could not relocate what was originally recorded as Feature 2. The actual Feature 2 is comprised of one conical and one saucer mortar and the recorded Feature 2 was comprised of three conical mortars. In addition, although the site record states that the site was comprised of five bedrock milling features, locational data for only four were provided with a fifth location being a small prehistoric lithic scatter. Further, although a historical component comprised of metal, glass, and ceramic fragments was described, locational information was not provided. The sparse lithic scatter and historical artifacts recorded as part of CA-RIV-9236H could not be relocated during the current *CRA* field survey conducted by a qualified archaeologist.

Two previously unrecorded bedrock milling features were also located within the boundaries of the Project site during the *CRA* field survey. These features are not considered to be part of CA-RIV-9236H and were assigned Primary numbers P-33-029123 and P-33-029124 by the Eastern Information Center. Site P-33-029123 is comprised of one conical mortar and one saucer mortar on a ground-level granitic outcrop, while P-33-029124 is comprised of two milling slicks on a ground-level granitic outcrop. These sites are located in an open space area west of Hurkey Creek that will not be developed as part of the proposed Project.

Based on CEQA criteria, archaeological sites CA-RIV-9236H, P-33-029123, and P-33-029124 would be considered “non-unique archaeological resources.” Bedrock milling sites are the most common resources in the vicinity of the Project site and are typical and numerous throughout Riverside County (i.e., tens of thousands recorded). Unless bedrock milling features have an associated cultural deposit that permits dating of the features and potentially provides information about other site activities, they are considered to have limited data potential and are not considered eligible for listing on the CRHR or the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As such, according to the State CEQA Guidelines, a “non-unique archaeological resource” need be given no further consideration, other than the simple recording of its existence by the Lead Agency. Unless Phase II Testing has been conducted for a bedrock milling site, it is not possible at this time to determine whether an associated subsurface cultural deposit exists at these locations. Until testing has been conducted, there is an assumption that a “non-unique archaeological resource” may possibly be determined significant and potentially be eligible for listing on the CRHR or NRHP.

In consideration of the above summary, it is clear that the proposed Project site is located in an area that is highly sensitive in terms of archaeological and historical resources (i.e., pre- and post-contact

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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resources). The three resource sites located within the boundaries of the proposed Project are considered “non-unique archaeological resources” according to CEQA criteria and all are within a designated open space area that is not part of the proposed Project development (see **Mitigation Measure MM-BIO-1**). Therefore, no further research or mitigation is recommended for these sites at this time.

In addition, archaeological sites are located on the Project site and two large multi-component sites representing both the pre-contact and post-contact periods are located immediately north of the Project site. Therefore, the CRA recommended that a Riverside County qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor actively monitor all on-site and off-site ground disturbing activities associated with development of the proposed Project including, but not limited to, grubbing, tree removal, vegetation clearance, trenching, excavation, bedrock removal, and grading. Should any cultural resources be discovered during the course of earthmoving activities anywhere on the subject property, said activities should be halted or diverted until the qualified archaeologist and tribal monitor can evaluate the resources, make a determination of their significance with concurrence of the Riverside County Archaeologist, and recommend appropriate treatment measures to mitigate impacts to the resources from the Project, if found to be significant (see COAs below).

If human remains are encountered unexpectedly during implementation of the project, compliance with State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 is required, with no further disturbances to the land until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98 (see COAs below).

The CRA identified the presence of cultural resources (which includes archaeological resources) within or adjacent to the Project area. None of these resources meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historic Places. However, archeological monitoring, Native American monitoring, disposition of human remains, and procedures if unanticipated resources are found during ground-disturbing activity are addressed by the County’s Conditions of Approval outlined below. With implementation of County standard COAs, potential Project impacts to cultural resources will be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

*b) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As discussed in Threshold 9.a, it has been determined that there are no significant archaeological resources as defined in California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5. However, in the event unanticipated resources are identified, the County’s COAs (see below) are required in the event an unanticipated resource is identified during ground disturbing activities. Any Project impacts that could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Section 15064.5 will be less than significant with implementation of County standard COAs and no mitigation required.

*c) Would the Project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Based on input provided by the consulting Native American tribes, there is a potential for human remains to be present in the Project area.

In order to reduce potentially significant impacts to previously unknown human remains that may be unexpectedly discovered during Project implementation, County conditions of approval and State Law requires that in the unlikely event that human remains are uncovered the contractor is required to halt work in the immediate area of the find and to notify the County Coroner, in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 7050.5, who must then determine whether the remains are of forensic interest. If the Coroner, with the aid of a supervising archaeologist, determines that the remains are or appear to be of a Native American, he/she must contact the Native American Heritage Commission for further investigations and proper recovery of such remains, if necessary.

Further, pursuant to Public Resource Code Section 5097.98(b) remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and disposition has been made. If the Riverside County Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted within the period specified by law (24 hours). Subsequently, the Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the "most likely descendant". The most likely descendant shall then make recommendations and engage in consultation concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

To further ensure compliance with the above-referenced state laws, the Project will implement the County's Standard Conditions of Approval. With implementation of County COAs, any Project impacts that could disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries, will be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Standard Conditions of Approval:**

**Human Remains.** If human remains are found on this site, the developer/permit holder or any successor in interest shall comply with State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. Pursuant to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are encountered, no further disturbance shall occur until the Riverside County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin. Further, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(b), remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and their disposition has been made. If the Riverside County Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted by the Coroner within the period specified by law (24 hours). Subsequently, the Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the "Most Likely Descendant". The Most Likely Descendant shall then make recommendations and engage in consultation with the property owner concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

**Unanticipated Resources.** The developer/permit holder or any successor in interest shall comply with the following for the life of this permit. If during ground disturbance activities, unanticipated cultural resources\* are discovered, the following procedures shall be followed:

All ground disturbance activities within 100 feet of the discovered cultural resource shall be halted and the applicant shall call the County Archaeologist immediately

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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upon discovery of the cultural resource. A meeting shall be convened between the developer, the project archaeologist\*\*, the Native American tribal representative (or other appropriate ethnic/cultural group representative), and the County Archaeologist to discuss the significance of the find. At the meeting with the aforementioned parties, a decision is to be made, with the concurrence of the County Archaeologist, as to the appropriate treatment (documentation, recovery, avoidance, etc.) for the cultural resource. Resource evaluations shall be limited to nondestructive analysis.

Further ground disturbance shall not resume within the area of the discovery until the appropriate treatment has been accomplished.

\* A cultural resource site is defined, for this condition, as being a feature and/or three or more artifacts in close association with each other.

\*\* If not already employed by the project developer, a County approved archaeologist shall be employed by the project developer to assess the significance of the cultural resource, attend the meeting described above, and continue monitoring of all future site grading activities as necessary.

**CRMP/Archaeological Monitor.** Prior to issuance of grading permits: The applicant/developer shall provide evidence to the County of Riverside Planning Department that a County certified professional archaeologist (Project Archaeologist) has been contracted to implement a Cultural Resource Monitoring Program (CRMP). A Cultural Resource Monitoring Plan shall be developed in coordination with the consulting tribe(s) that addresses the details of all activities and provides procedures that must be followed in order to reduce the impacts to cultural, tribal cultural and historic resources to a level that is less than significant as well as address potential impacts to undiscovered buried archaeological resources associated with this project. A fully executed copy of the contract and a digitally-signed copy of the Monitoring Plan shall be provided to the County Archaeologist to ensure compliance with this condition of approval. Working directly under the Project Archaeologist, an adequate number of qualified Archaeological Monitors shall be present to ensure that all earth moving activities are observed and shall be on-site during all grading activities for areas to be monitored including off-site improvements. Inspections will vary based on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and the presence and abundance of artifacts and features. The Professional Archaeologist may submit a detailed letter to the County of Riverside during grading requesting a modification to the monitoring program if circumstances are encountered that reduce the need for monitoring.

**ECS Sheet (Cultural).** Prior to final map approval the developer/ applicant shall provide evidence to the Riverside County Planning Department that an Environmental Constraints Sheet has been included in the Grading Plans. This sheet shall indicate the presence of environmentally constrained area(s) and the requirements for avoidance of CA-RIV-9236, P-33-029123, and P-33-029124.

**Native American Monitor Required.** Prior to the issuance of grading permits, the developer/permit applicant shall enter into agreement(s) with the consulting tribe(s) for Native American Monitor(s). In conjunction with the Archaeological Monitor(s), the

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Native American Monitor(s) shall attend the pre-grading meeting with the contractors to provide Cultural Sensitivity Training for all construction personnel. In addition, an adequate number of Native American Monitor(s) shall be on-site during all initial ground disturbing activities and excavation of each portion of the project site including clearing, grubbing, tree removals, grading and trenching. In conjunction with the Archaeological Monitor(s), the Native American Monitor(s) have the authority to temporarily divert, redirect or halt the ground disturbance activities to allow identification, evaluation, and potential recovery of cultural resources. The developer/permit applicant shall submit a fully executed copy of the agreement(s) to the County Archaeologist to ensure compliance with this condition of approval. Upon verification, the Archaeologist shall clear this condition. This agreement shall not modify any condition of approval or mitigation measure.

**Temporary Fencing (Cultural).** Temporary fencing shall be required for the protection of any cultural site(s) located within 100' of grading activities. Prior to commencement of grading or brushing, the project archaeologist shall confirm the site boundaries and determine an adequate buffer for protection of the site(s). The applicant shall direct the installation of fencing under the supervision of the project archaeologist and Native American Monitor. The fencing can be removed only after grading operations have been completed.

**Artifact Disposition.** In the event cultural resources are identified during ground disturbing activities, the landowner(s) shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources and provide evidence to the satisfaction of the County Archaeologist that all archaeological materials recovered during the archaeological investigations (this includes collections made during an earlier project, such as testing of archaeological sites that took place years ago), have been handled through the following methods. Any artifacts identified and collected during construction grading activities are not to leave the project area and shall remain onsite in a secure location until final disposition. Historic Resources All historic archaeological materials recovered during the archaeological investigations (this includes collections made during an earlier project, such as testing of archaeological sites that took place years ago), have been curated at the Western Science Center, a Riverside County curation facility that meets State Resources Department Office of Historic Preservation Guidelines for the Curation of Archaeological Resources. Evidence shall be in the form of a letter from the curation facility identifying that archaeological materials have been received and that all fees have been paid. Prehistoric and/or Tribal Cultural Resources One of the following treatments shall be applied.

1. Preservation In-place, if feasible is the preferred option. Preservation in place means avoiding the resources, leaving them in the place where they were found with no development affecting the integrity of the resources.
2. Reburial of the resources on the Project property. The measures for reburial shall be culturally appropriate as determined through consultation with the consulting Tribe(s) and include, at least, the following: Measures to protect the reburial area from any future impacts in perpetuity. Reburial shall not occur until all required cataloguing (including a complete photographic record) and analysis have been completed on the cultural resources, with the exception that sacred and ceremonial items, burial

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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goods, and Native American human remains are excluded. No cataloguing, analysis, or other studies may occur on human remains grave goods, and sacred and ceremonial items. Any reburial processes shall be culturally appropriate and approved by the consulting tribe(s). Listing of contents and location of the reburial shall be included in the confidential Phase IV Report. The Phase IV Report shall be filed with the County under a confidential cover and not subject to a Public Records Request. Human Remains Pursuant to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are encountered, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin. Further, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (b), remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and their disposition has been made. If the Riverside County Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted by the Coroner within the period specified by law (24 hours). Subsequently, the Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the "Most Likely Descendant". The Most Likely Descendant shall then make recommendations and engage in consultation with the property owner concerning the treatment of the remains and any associated items as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

**Phase IV Monitoring Report.** Prior to Grading Permit Final Inspection, a Phase IV Cultural Resources Monitoring Report shall be submitted that complies with the Riverside County Planning Department's requirements for such reports for all ground disturbing activities associated with this grading permit. The report shall follow the County of Riverside Planning Department Cultural Resources (Archaeological) Investigations Standard Scopes of Work posted on the TLMA website. The report shall include results of any feature relocation or residue analysis required as well as evidence of the required cultural sensitivity training for the construction staff held during the required pre-grade meeting and evidence that any artifacts have been treated in accordance to procedures stipulated in the Cultural Resources Management Plan.

**COA Monitoring:** A copy of all agreements between the Project developer and the appropriate Band of Luiseño Indians shall be provided to the County for retention. Field inspections by County Staff shall verify that all aspects of the agreement are being implemented by the developer, professional monitor and Tribal monitors, during ground disturbing activities. Any cultural resources reports produced as a result of Project monitoring shall be provided to the County within 60 days of completion. All reports and field notes shall be retained in the Project file. The Planning Department will also monitor any potential changes to the Project and their impacts on prehistoric resources.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**ENERGY** Would the Project:

**10. Energy Impacts**

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

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a State or Local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Ranch Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 11-19-2021 (*AQ/GHG Analysis, Appendix B*); and *Ridge Ranch Trip Generation and Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) Screening*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 8-26-2021 (*TG/VMT Analysis, Appendix I*).

**Note:** Any tables or figures in this section are from the *AQ/GHG Analysis* or the *TG/VMT Analysis*, unless otherwise noted.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during Project construction or operation?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

**Background Information**

There are many different types and sources of energy produced and consumed in the United States. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) categorizes energy by primary and secondary sources, renewable and nonrenewable sources, and by the different types of fossil fuels. Primary energy is captured directly from natural resources and includes fossil fuels, nuclear energy, and renewable sources of energy. Electricity is a secondary energy source that results from the transformation of primary energy sources. A renewable energy source includes solar energy from the sun, geothermal energy from heat inside the earth, wind energy, biomass from plants, and hydropower from flowing water. Nonrenewable energy sources include petroleum products, hydrocarbon gas liquids, natural gas, coal, and nuclear energy.

Fossil fuels are non-renewable resources formed by organic matter over millions of years and include oil, coal and natural gas. The EIA defines the five energy consuming sectors within the United States as follows:

- **Industrial Sector:** Includes facilities and equipment used for manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and construction.
- **Transportation Sector:** Includes vehicles that transport people or goods, such as cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, trains, aircraft, boats, barges, and ships.
- **Residential Sector:** Includes homes and apartments.
- **Commercial Sector:** Includes offices, malls, stores, schools, hospitals, hotels, warehouses, restaurants, and places of worship and public assembly.
- **Electric Power Sector:** Consumes primary energy to generate most of the electricity the other four sectors consume.

Energy sources are measured in different physical units: liquid fuels are measured in barrels or gallons, natural gas in cubic feet, coal in short tons, and electricity in kilowatts and kilowatt-hours. In the United States, British thermal units (Btu), a measure of heat energy, is commonly used for comparing different types of energy to each other.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Project Energy Consumption**

The three (3) main types of energy expected to be consumed by the Project include electricity, natural gas, and petroleum products in the form of gasoline and diesel fuel. Energy usage for the proposed Project is calculated based on the *TG/VMT Analysis* and the *AQ/GHG Analysis*. The California Emissions Estimator Model Version 2021.4 (CalEEMod) is used to calculate energy usage from Project construction and operational activities. In the application materials, the Project is described as follows:

*The Ridge Guest Ranch proposes an eco-conscious private guest ranch. The project site will retain all the natural vegetation and all the historic large pine trees within its design. The Ridge will be designed to facilitate a full immersion nature experience in Mountain Center and the Ranch will offer a variety of self-development therapies and recreational activities such as natural hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, water-based activities at Lake Hemet, in addition to cultural and environmental education of the area will be all part of the experience at the Ranch. The project proposes to construct guest cabins and manufactured guest tents, with a wellness center, kitchen and dining room, and activity hub and lap pool, and a large agricultural site and food lab for all guests to experience.*

*The structures themselves will be designed to maintain the environmental character in which they are located. The Ridge will pursue energy efficiency through thoughtful architecture and building orientation and incorporate, among other things, green building materials, solar power, water conservation techniques such as groundwater recharge basins, use of porous pavement, drought tolerant landscaping and water recycling as appropriate. The majority of the land will remain undeveloped and in its current natural element.*

Therefore, the Project is expected to be extremely energy conscious and will minimize its use of electricity, natural gas (propane), and water.

**Electricity Consumption**

The Project will use electricity for many different operational activities including, but not limited to, building ventilation and cooling, cooking in the kitchen, lighting, appliances, electronics, mechanical equipment, electric vehicle charging, and parking lot lighting. Indirect electricity usage will also be required to supply, distribute, and treat water although wastewater will be accommodated by an alternative to a septic system called an Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU) which does not use electricity. Electricity will be provided to the site by the Anza Electric Co-Op and possibly a private solar system in the future. If private solar equipment is installed in the future, it would help reduce the Project’s consumption of electrical energy from the regional grid during the day. However, the consumption of electricity estimated below assumes no onsite solar equipment. Therefore, the *AQ/GHG Analysis* estimates the Project will consume 546,726 kilowatt hours (kWh) or 1,865.4 million British thermal units (Btu)<sup>3</sup> per year of electricity as a “worst case” assumption.

Temporary electricity usage for construction activities may include lighting, electric equipment and mobile office uses, however, CalEEMod does not calculate electricity usage during construction. Electricity usage during construction is expected to be short-term and relatively minor compared to the operational demand, and therefore electricity usage during construction is not counted in this analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Assumes 1 kWh = 3,412 Btu



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Propane Consumption

The Project is expected to use propane for pool heating and the emergency power generator while cooking and kitchen appliances will be electric. The Project is not anticipated to have piped natural gas supplied to the site. All propane used by the Project is expected to be imported and stored on-site via on-site storage tanks. Propane is not expected to be used during construction in any significant quantities and is not included in the overall calculation of the Project’s propane consumption. It should be noted that the CalEEMod does not provide for propane consumption, but it is generally considered equivalent to consumption of natural gas. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, it is assumed that the Project uses the same amount BTUs for propane consumption as is reported for natural gas in CalEEMod. The *AQ/GHG Analysis* estimates the Project will consume 1,863 cubic feet or 186,294 million Btu<sup>4</sup> per year of propane per year.

Petroleum Consumption

The Project’s energy consumption from petroleum products is primarily associated with transportation related activities. This includes gasoline and diesel fuel used for auto and truck trips and off-road equipment during construction and operation and off-road equipment usage during construction.

*Construction*

Construction of the Project is estimated (worst-case) to last approximately one year and consist of site preparation, grading, building construction, and architectural coating phases. The site will not have paved roads, but vehicles will instead use roller compressed decomposed granite roadways. Construction activities will consume energy in the form of motor vehicle fuel (gasoline and diesel) for off-road construction equipment and on-road vehicle trips. Vehicle trips include workers and vendors traveling to and from the job site. Based on the construction equipment scheduling shown in the *AQ/GHG Analysis*, and the relatively rural location of the site, it is estimated that both on- and off-road construction activities will consume approximately 150,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 200,000 gallons of gasoline which is equivalent to 44,756 million Btu of total energy<sup>5</sup> for construction.

*Operation*

The Project is expected to consume energy from auto and truck trips generated by the proposed land uses, as described in the *TG/VMT Analysis* and the *AQ/GHG Analysis*. Operational vehicle trips are associated with workers, customers and vendors/non-workers (i.e., delivery, service, maintenance vehicles, etc.) traveling to and from the site. The *TG/VMT Analysis* indicates Project operation will generate 799,988 vehicle miles travelled (VMT) each year. Assuming a composite fuel efficiency of 18.5 miles per gallon, operation of the Project will annually consume approximately 43,143 gallons of gasoline or diesel fuel. This equals 5,927 million Btu of total energy<sup>6</sup> for vehicle operations of the Project.

<sup>4</sup> Assumes 1 cubic foot of gas = 1,000 Btu

<sup>5</sup> assuming 1 gallon of gasoline fuel = 120,429 Btu and 1 gallon of diesel fuel = 137,381 Btu

<sup>6</sup> 1 gallon of gasoline fuel = 120,429 Btu and 1 gallon of diesel fuel = 137,381 Btu so estimate assumes diesel fuel as worst case

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Total Project Energy Consumption**

The previous sections estimate the Project’s total energy consumption will be 238,842 million Btu for both construction (one-time) and operation (annual) activities. Total Project energy consumption includes electricity, propane, and petroleum usage during construction and operation. The Project will be required to comply with the mandatory requirements of California’s Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) and Green Building Standards (CALGreen, Title 24, Part 11). California’s building energy efficiency standards are some of the strictest in the nation and the Project’s compliance with California’s building code will ensure that wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary consumption of energy is minimized. The building standards code is designed to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool a building, reduce energy usage for lighting and appliances and promote usage of energy from renewable sources. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project conflict with or obstruct a State or Local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project will purchase electricity through the Anza Electric Co-Op which is subject to the requirements of California Senate Bill 100 (SB 100). SB 100 is the most stringent and current energy legislation in California, requiring that renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100% of retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers and 100% of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by December 31, 2045.

The Project will further comply with the mandatory requirements of California’s Green Building and Building Energy Efficiency standards that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency; refer to Threshold 10.a. In addition, one of the main goals of the Project is to introduce and involve the participants in an eco-friendly and environmentally conscious lifestyle, so the Project will strongly emphasize energy conservation in its activities. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**GEOLOGY AND SOILS** Would the Project directly or indirectly:

**11. Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or County Fault Hazard Zones**

a) Be subject to 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?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (Geo Investigation, Appendix E1); Report of Active Faulting, The Ridge Wellness*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Center, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc. 10-12-2020 (*Fault Study, Appendix E2*); and Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-2 *Earthquake Fault Study Zones*.

**Note:** Any tables or figures in this section are from the *Geo Investigation* or the *Fault Study*, unless otherwise noted.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Be subject to 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?*

***Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated***

The Project proposes a “wellness” or guest ranch with 36 lodging facilities (both buildings and tents), a kitchen, administration/storage building, various activity buildings, and other site improvements. The new buildings are proposed in the eastern portion of the site and will be constructed mainly of wood with concrete floor slabs on grade. Site improvements include retaining walls up to 6 feet high, access drives and parking stalls, a swimming pool and restroom building, exterior concrete walkways and patios, fence/screen walls, courtyards, planter areas, greenhouses, and landscaping. Other proposed improvements include a stormwater management system and above-ground domestic water tanks. Sewage will be managed through various onsite treatment systems. In addition, an electrical transformer pad and switchgear will be needed.

San Jacinto Mountains are part of the Transverse Ranges Geomorphic Province of California which is characterized by east–west trending mountains and valleys, making them “transverse” to the northwest–southeast orientation of most of California's coastal mountains. The Project site is located within an elongated valley in the San Jacinto Mountains which is a fault block of granitic rocks squeezed between the San Jacinto fault system on the west and the San Andreas fault system on the east. These two regional faults are very active and capable of producing major earthquakes of Richter Magnitude 7.2. The last massive quake struck the southern segment of the San Andreas-San Jacinto fault complex more than 200 years ago. Due to the complex geologic and seismic conditions in this area, both a *Geo Investigation* and a *Fault Study* were prepared for the Project site.

The San Jacinto Fault runs in a northwest-southeast direction through the Project area, as shown in **Figure 11-1, San Jacinto Fault Zone**. Almost the entire site is within the San Jacinto Fault Zone, as shown on the General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-2 *Earthquake Fault Study Zones*. This fault is considered active and is covered by the State Alquist-Priolo Act.

The General Plan and state law require a fault study be prepared when structures are proposed on or near faults so they can be accurately delineated, and buildings located out of the fault zone. The *Geo Investigation* indicates two localized faults, the Hot Springs fault (Anza segment, which is a splay of the San Jacinto Fault) and the Thomas Mountain fault are located on and in the immediate vicinity of the Project site. These faults involve the central and southern portions of the site, as shown in **Figure 11-2, Local Faults**. The Hot Springs Creek Fault alignment is parallel to and within the San Jacinto Fault Zone (northeast-southwest), while the Thomas Mountain Fault appears to intersect the Hot Springs Creek Fault at an oblique angle just west of the Project site. Therefore, both of the faults are considered to be “on” or beneath the Project site.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The *Fault Study* presented evidence that the Hot Springs fault offsets granitic bedrock at depths of 45 to 50 feet on or near the Project site. The granitic alluvium (soil) above the granite bedrock is relatively young and the geotechnical/fault testing on the site could not determine if underlying soils showed offset from recent seismic activity (i.e., a fault is considered “active” if it shows movement within recent “Holocene” time or the last 11,000 years). To err on the side of caution, the *Geo Investigation* and the *Fault Study* concluded the two fault structures beneath the central and southern portions of the Project site should be considered active, their surface expressions should likewise be considered active, and a habitable building restriction zone should be established on the site to provide a safe setback for Project buildings from the fault zone. The *Geo Investigation* and the *Fault Study* recommended a building restriction or setback zone that extends 50 feet beyond the possible fault zone, as shown in **Figure 11-3, Onsite Seismic Setback Zone**. The mapping reflects detailed locational information in the *Fault Study* and *Geo Investigation* as to the specific location of the setback zone.

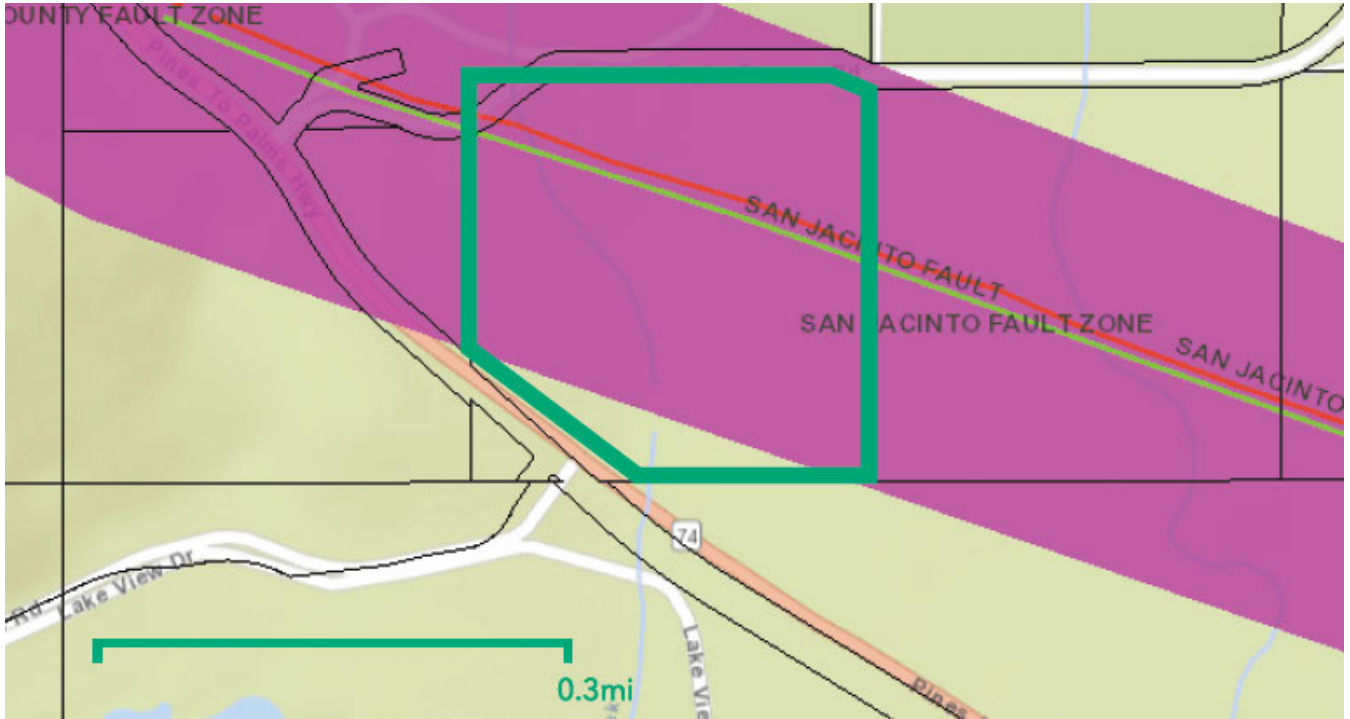
The Project proposes a guest ranch on the site with low intensity activities and buildings (i.e., one-story). The proposed Project buildings are all located outside of the proposed building setback zone. **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-1** is recommended to assure that Project buildings are constructed outside of the designated seismic setback zone recommended by the Project *Geo Investigation* and *Fault Study*. With implementation of the recommended mitigation, potential impacts of the Project related to ground rupture from fault activity are reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:**

**MM-GEO-1 Seismic Setback Zone.** Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, the project developer shall have the fault setback zone identified in the Project *Fault Study* (Petra 2020) shown on all appropriate Project plans to be submitted to the County for review and approval. The determination of which plans must show the setback is at the discretion of the County based on its development review requirements. The limits and boundaries of the setback zone are based on the locational data provided in the *Fault Study*. Prior to the issuance of any permit, the developer must demonstrate that no habitable structure(s) covered by the permit is/are within the identified seismic setback zone. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Geologist.

**Monitoring:** Building plans will reflect the seismic setback zone which will be verified by County staff prior to issuance of any permits.

**FIGURE11-1  
San Jacinto Fault Zone**

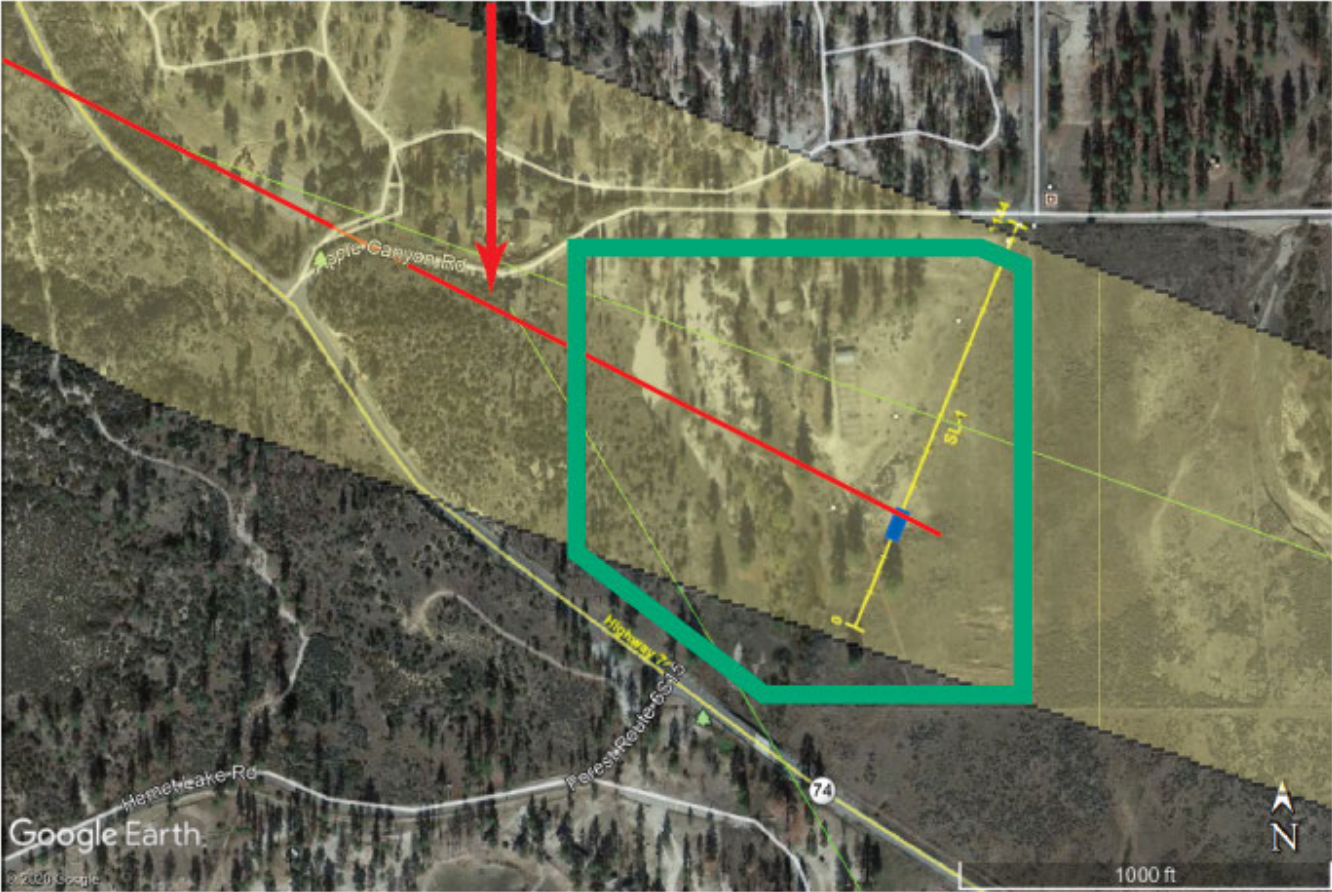





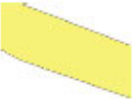
**LIMITS OF THE RIDGE PROJECT**

Source: Fault Study (**Appendix E2**)

**FIGURE11-2  
Local Faults**

**PROJECTION OF UNDEFLECTED HOT SPRINGS FAULT**

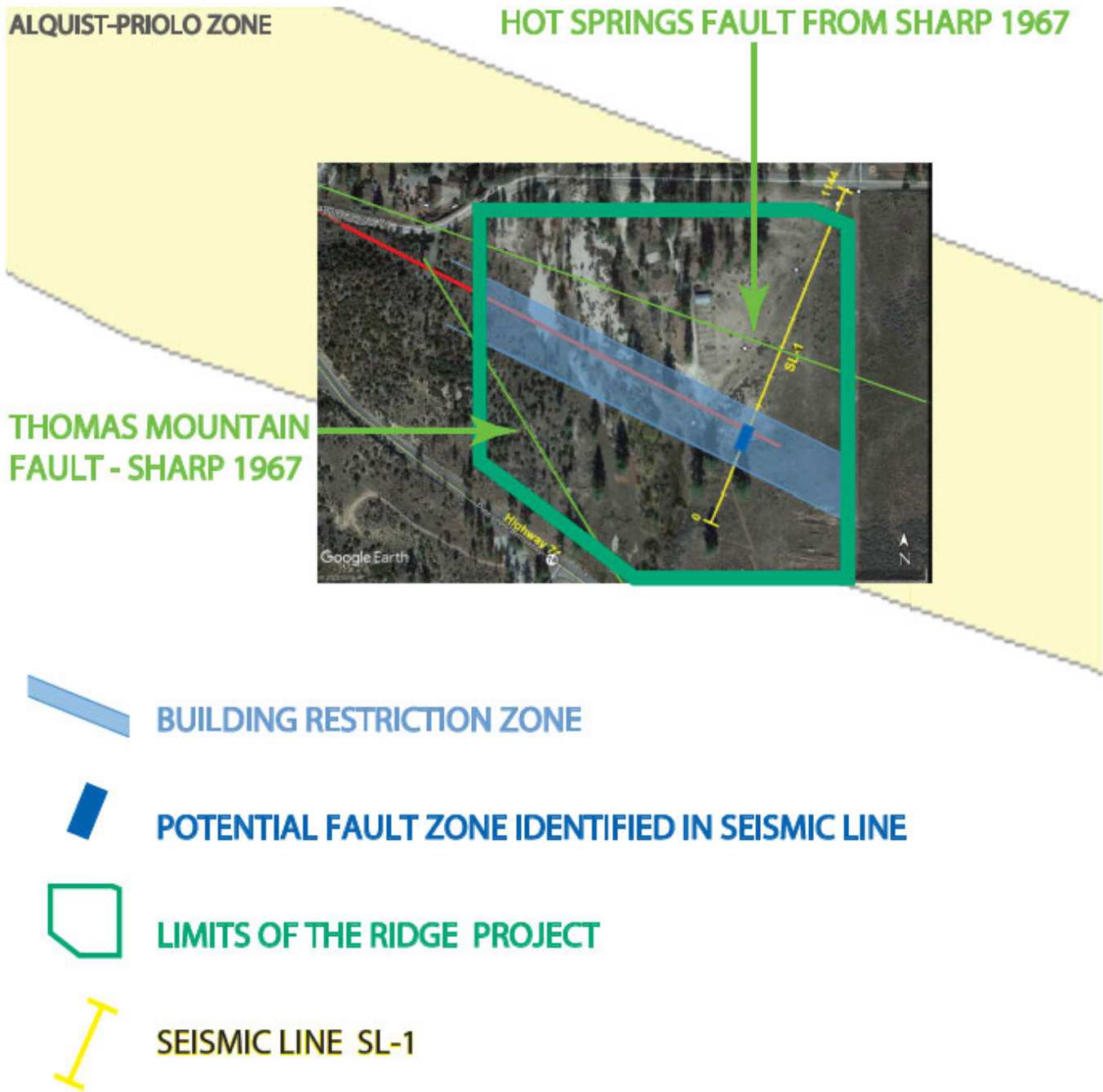


-  **POTENTIAL FAULT ZONE IDENTIFIED IN SEISMIC LINE**
-  **LIMITS OF THE RIDGE PROJECT**
-  **SEISMIC LINE SL-1**
-  **ALQUIST-PRIOLO ZONE**

Source: Fault Study (Appendix E2)



**FIGURE11-3  
Onsite Seismic Setback Zone**



Source: Fault Study (**Appendix E2**)

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**12. Liquefaction Potential Zone**

a) Be subject to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (Geo Investigation, Appendix E1); Geotechnical Review and Supplemental Analyses, Ridge Wellness Center, prepared by Sladden Engineering, 5-18-2023 (SE Report, Appendix E3); Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-3 Generalized Liquefaction; and County of Riverside, Ordinance No. 457.*

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Be subject to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*

**Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project proposes a number of buildings with concrete pads in the eastern portion of the site that may be subject to liquefaction, differential settlement, and lateral spreading due to regional and local geologic conditions. Liquefaction commonly occurs when three conditions are present on-site simultaneously:

- (1) Relatively loose, cohesionless (sandy) soil;
- (2) High groundwater; and
- (3) Earthquake-generated seismic waves.

The presence of these conditions may cause a loss of shear strength and, in many cases, the settlement of subsurface soils, and the risk is proportional to the magnitude of the affecting earthquake. The site is not located within a County-designed Liquefaction Hazard Zone per Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-3 *Generalized Liquefaction*. However, a subsurface exploration of the Project site was conducted as part of the *Geo Investigation* which found shallow groundwater (from 7.6 to 12.5 feet below the ground surface) and granitic sandy soils beneath the site. These soils overlie weathered granitic bedrock which was encountered at depth of 8 to 40 feet. In addition, Threshold 11 indicates there are fault structures beneath the site including a splay of the San Jacinto Fault which is a major regional fault that can produce large magnitude earthquakes. Therefore, the local potential for liquefaction on the Project site is considered to be high based on the presence of shallow groundwater, sandy soils, and the potential for moderate to large earthquakes in the area. Liquefaction is a type of seismically induced ground failure but there are other causes of such failures which were also addressed in the *Geo Investigation* such as the presence of two active fault structures beneath the Project site (see Threshold 11).

Current California Building Code (CBC) requirements pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life during earthquakes by ensuring that the proposed Project site structures are constructed pursuant to applicable seismic design criteria for the region. CBC requirements are applicable to all development; therefore, they are considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. In addition, the proposed Project site will comply with the *Geo Investigation*. This is also a standard condition and is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The *Geo Investigation* indicated that the goal of liquefaction mitigation is to “provide a foundation system that can withstand the expected movement without causing such structural damage so as to pose a life-safety hazard such as structural collapse from excessive lateral drift”. The *Geo Investigation* recommended a “ground improvement program” to minimize potential impacts from liquefaction. However, the results of the *Geo Investigation* relative to liquefaction, differential settlement, and lateral spreading were peer reviewed by Sladden Engineering (SE) in May 2023 to assure the County and applicant that the most appropriate project design features were being included to protect the Project from these geotechnical/soils constraints. The *SE Report* concluded that the potential seismic settlement impacts would be adequately mitigated with remedial grading and appropriate foundation design recommended in the *Geo Investigation* (minus the ground improvement plan originally recommended. The specific recommendations of the SE Report Project grading will still include compaction of onsite soils during grading as well as other specific procedures during ground preparation, earthwork/excavation, fill placement, cut and fill slopes, shrinkage and subsidence, use of oversized materials (e.g., boulders), and options for footing and foundation design. The County also has a standard Condition of Approval (COA) that requires project design to comply with the approved seismic and geotechnical studies prepared for the Project (in this case, the *Geo Investigation* and the *SE Report*). Compliance with COAs is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA.

With adherence to current CBC standards, the Project geotechnical studies, County standard seismic conditions, and implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-2**, any potential impacts to the Project from seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, differential settlement, and lateral spreading will be reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:**

**MM-GEO-2 Remedial Grading.** The *SE Report* recommended remedial grading as the most effective seismic settlement mitigation method for the Project. To provide firm and uniform foundation bearing conditions and to mitigate potential liquefaction related seismic settlements, the primary foundation bearing soil shall be over-excavated and recompacted. Over-excavation shall extend to a minimum depth of 5 feet below existing grade or 5 feet below the bottom of the proposed building footing elevations, whichever is deeper. Once adequate removals have been verified, the exposed native soil shall be moisture conditioned to near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction. Geo-grid reinforcements shall also be placed within the excavation bottom to provide additional seismic settlement mitigation. The previously removed material shall then be placed in thin lifts at near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction compacted engineered fill. Removals shall extend at least 10 feet laterally beyond the building limits. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Geologist and County Engineer or their designees.

**Monitoring:** The County Geologist will require monitoring of the proposed remedial grading program prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the Project.

**13. Ground-shaking Zone**

a) Be subject to strong seismic ground shaking?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (*Geo Investigation, Appendix E1*); *Report of Active Faulting, The Ridge Wellness Center, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc. 10-12-2020 (*Fault Study, Appendix E2*); *Geotechnical Review and Supplemental Analyses, Ridge Wellness Center*, prepared by Sladden Engineering, 5-18-2023 (*SE Report, Appendix E3*); Riverside County General Plan Figure S-4 “Earthquake-Induced Slope Instability Map;” and Ordinance No. 457.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Be subject to strong seismic ground shaking?*

***Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated***

As discussed in Thresholds 11 and 12, the Project site and surrounding area are underlain by earthquake faults including the regionally significant San Jacinto Fault which is capable of creating a Magnitude 8.1 earthquake. The *Geo Investigation* concluded the site and proposed buildings have a relatively high seismic risk (2022 CBC Class II per Table 1604.5). It also concluded the site had “stiff” soils (CBC Site Class D). The *Geo Investigation* concluded the site could be subject to “strong” seismic shaking of 0.639 g or approximately two-thirds the force of gravity expressed horizontally<sup>7</sup>.

California Building Code (CBC) requirements pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life during earthquakes by ensuring that the proposed Project site structures are constructed pursuant to applicable seismic design criteria for the region. Current CBC requirements are applicable to all development; therefore, they are considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. In addition, the proposed Project site will comply with the *Geo Investigation*. This is also a standard condition and is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

Due to the presence of active mapped faults across the Project site, there is a potential for surface rupture and a moderate to high amount of seismic shaking expected.

Although the Project site is not located within an area mapped by Riverside County as having a potential for liquefaction, the *Geo Investigation* found a high localized potential for liquefaction due to onsite geologic conditions. To alleviate the high onsite potential for liquefaction and seismically induced settlement, the *Geo Investigation* recommended implementation of a “ground improvement program”. However, the results of the *Geo Investigation* relative to liquefaction, differential settlement, and lateral spreading were peer reviewed by Sladden Engineering (SE) in May 2023 to assure the County and applicant that the most appropriate project design features were being included to protect the Project from these geotechnical/soils constraints. The *SE Report* concluded that the potential seismic settlement impacts would be adequately mitigated with remedial grading and appropriate foundation design recommended in the *Geo Investigation* (minus the ground improvement plan originally recommended).

The recommendations of the SE Report are incorporated into **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-2**. Project grading will still include compaction of onsite soils during grading as well as other specific

<sup>7</sup> S1 - Mapped Spectral Response Acceleration Long Period (1.0 second) per Table 4, Petra Geosciences 2022

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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procedures during ground preparation, earthwork/excavation, fill placement, cut and fill slopes, shrinkage and subsidence, use of oversized materials (e.g., boulders), and options for footing and foundation design. The County also has a standard Condition of Approval (COA) that requires project design to comply with the approved seismic and geotechnical studies prepared for the Project (in this case, the *Geo Investigation* and the *SE Report*). Compliance with COAs is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA.

With adherence to current CBC standards, County standard seismic conditions, the approved Project geotechnical reports, and implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-2**, any potential impacts to the Project from strong seismic ground shaking will be reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:**

**MM-GEO-2 Remedial Grading.** The *SE Report* recommended remedial grading as the most effective seismic settlement mitigation method for the Project. To provide firm and uniform foundation bearing conditions and to mitigate potential liquefaction related seismic settlements, the primary foundation bearing soil shall be over-excavated and recompacted. Over-excavation shall extend to a minimum depth of 5 feet below existing grade or 5 feet below the bottom of the proposed building footing elevations, whichever is deeper. Once adequate removals have been verified, the exposed native soil shall be moisture conditioned to near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction. Geo-grid reinforcements shall also be placed within the excavation bottom to provide additional seismic settlement mitigation. The previously removed material shall then be placed in thin lifts at near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction compacted engineered fill. Removals shall extend at least 10 feet laterally beyond the building limits. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Geologist and County Engineer or their designees.

**Monitoring:** The County Geologist will require monitoring of the proposed remedial grading program prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the Project.

**14. Landslide Risk**

a) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, collapse, or rockfall hazards?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (*Geo Investigation, Appendix E1*); and Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-5 *Regions Underlain by Steep Slope*.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, collapse, or rockfall hazards?*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**No Impact**

According to the *Geo Investigation*, the site is not located within a State- or County-designed Landslide Hazard Zone. The *Geo Investigation* indicates the site gently slopes to the south-southwest and other than the creek bed does not contain any significant topographic features. Therefore, the site does not represent a rockfall or landslide hazard to the Project. Based on available information, the Project site’s proposed development plan will not be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, collapse, or rockfall hazards. There will be no impacts and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**15. Ground Subsidence**

a) 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 ground subsidence?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (*Geo Investigation, Appendix E1*); *Geotechnical Review and Supplemental Analyses, Ridge Wellness Center*, prepared by Sladden Engineering, 5-18-2023 (*SE Report, Appendix E3*); Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-7 *Documented Subsidence Areas Map*; and Ordinance No. 457.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *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 ground subsidence?*

**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**

Subsidence refers to the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. It may be caused by a variety of human and natural activities, including earthquakes.

Subsidence typically occurs throughout a susceptible valley. In addition, differential displacement and fissures occur at or near the valley margin, and along faults. In the County of Riverside, the worst damage to structures as a result of regional subsidence may be expected at the valley margins. Alluvial valley regions are especially susceptible.

Liquefaction is a type of seismically induced ground failure or subsidence. The three requirements for liquefaction to occur include seismic shaking, poorly consolidated cohesionless sands, and groundwater. Liquefaction results in a substantial loss of shear strength in loose, saturated, cohesionless soils subjected to earthquake induced ground shaking. Potential impacts from liquefaction include loss of bearing capacity, liquefaction related settlement, lateral movements, and surface manifestation in the form of sand boils.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The potential for design level earthquake induced liquefaction and lateral spreading to occur beneath the proposed structures on the Project site is considered to be high (see Threshold 12).

Current California Building Code (CBC) requirements pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life during earthquakes by ensuring that the proposed Project site structures are constructed pursuant to applicable seismic design criteria for the region. CBC requirements are applicable to all development; therefore, they are considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. In addition, the proposed Project site will comply with the *Geo Investigation* regarding unstable geological conditions or soil materials. This is also a standard condition and is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

As outlined in Threshold 12, the *Geo Investigation* recommended a “ground improvement program” to minimize potential impacts from liquefaction. However, the results of the *Geo Investigation* relative to liquefaction, differential settlement, and lateral spreading were peer reviewed by Sladden Engineering (SE) in May 2023 to assure the County and applicant that the most appropriate project design features were being included to protect the Project from these geotechnical/soils constraints. The *SE Report* concluded that the potential seismic settlement impacts would be adequately mitigated with remedial grading and appropriate foundation design recommended in the *Geo Investigation* (minus the ground improvement plan originally recommended).

The recommendations of the *SE Report* are incorporated into **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-2**. Project grading will still include compaction of onsite soils during grading as well as other specific procedures during ground preparation and earthwork/excavation. Such guidelines and restrictions address all potential onsite risks or conditions regarding unstable geology or soil units, including subsidence.

With adherence to current CBC standards, County standard seismic conditions, and implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-GEO-2**, any potential impacts to the Project from being 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 ground subsidence, will be reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:**

**MM-GEO-2 Remedial Grading.** The *SE Report* recommended remedial grading as the most effective seismic settlement mitigation method for the Project. To provide firm and uniform foundation bearing conditions and to mitigate potential liquefaction related seismic settlements, the primary foundation bearing soil shall be over-excavated and recompacted. Over-excavation shall extend to a minimum depth of 5 feet below existing grade or 5 feet below the bottom of the proposed building footing elevations, whichever is deeper. Once adequate removals have been verified, the exposed native soil shall be moisture conditioned to near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction. Geo-grid reinforcements shall also be placed within the excavation bottom to provide additional seismic settlement mitigation. The previously removed material shall then be placed in thin lifts at near optimum moisture content and compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction compacted engineered fill. Removals shall extend at least 10 feet laterally beyond the building limits. This measure shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Geologist and County Engineer or their designees.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Monitoring:** The County Geologist will require monitoring of the proposed remedial grading program prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the Project.

**16. Other Geologic Hazards**

a) Be subject to geologic hazards, such as seiche, mudflow, or volcanic hazard?

**Source(s):** *Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (*Geo Investigation, Appendix E1*); Google Maps; and **Figure 3, Aerial Photo**, provided in Section I of this IS.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Be subject to geologic hazards, such as seiche, mudflow, or volcanic hazard?*

**No Impact**

Seismically induced flooding is normally associated with a tsunami (seismic sea wave), a seiche (i.e., a wave-like oscillation of surface water in an enclosed basin that may be initiated by a strong earthquake) or failure of a major reservoir or retention system up gradient of the site. As a result of the site being at an elevation of more than 4,000 feet above mean sea level and being more than 50 miles inland from the nearest coastline of the Pacific Ocean, the potential for seismically induced flooding due to a tsunami is considered remote. The likelihood of induced flooding due to a seiche overcoming a dam’s freeboard is considered remote. In addition, there is no major reservoir or water impoundment up gradient of the Project site would be compromised to a point of failure, resulting in inundation of the site. The only large body of water in the Project area is Lake Hemet which is 1,500 feet southwest of the site but it is 30 feet lower in elevation so it could not result in flooding or inundation of the Project site. The site slopes gently down to the southwest but the only topographic relief onsite is Hurkey Creek which flows through the center of the site from north to south. In addition, the bed and banks of Hurkey Creek now contain the 100-year flood limits of the creek so the risks of mudflows or inundation from the creek onto the rest of the site is considered minimal.

Based on the above, implementation of the Project would not be subject to geologic hazards, such as tsunami, or seiche.

There are no volcanic hazards in proximity of the Project site. Any mudflows associated with a volcanic hazard are not applicable to the Project.

The Project site is not subject to geologic hazards, such as seiche, mudflow, or volcanic hazard. There will be no impacts and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>17. Slopes</b>				
a) Change topography or ground surface relief features?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create cut or fill slopes greater than 2:1 or higher than 10 feet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in grading that affects or negates subsurface sewage disposal systems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (*Geo Investigation, Appendix E1*); *Project Plans (Appendix K)*; *ATS System Design*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022 (**Appendix L**); *OWTS Report*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021 (**Appendix M**); and Ordinance No. 457.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Change topography or ground surface relief features?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project site generally slopes to the south and southwest but contains no significant topographical features except for Hurkey Creek which bisects the site in a north to south direction. The Project proposes a “wellness” ranch with a number of new wooden buildings and supporting structures including tents. The new buildings are proposed in the eastern portion of the site and will be constructed mainly of wood with concrete floor slabs on grade. The topography of the site varies from 4,445 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along the northern boundary down to 4,334 feet AMSL along the southern boundary. There are no natural, cut, or fill slopes onsite in excess of 10 feet in height or steeper than 2:1 (horizontal: vertical).

The Project plans indicate new buildings and improvements will not require the construction of cut or fill slopes greater than 10 feet in height or steeper than 2:1 (horizontal:vertical). The *Geo Investigation* evaluated the proposed buildings and improvements and determined the proposed no unusual contour or slope changes on the site. The investigation included recommendations on creating cut and fill slopes consistent with County grading procedures. The proposed Project site will be required to comply with the *Geo Investigation* - this is also a County standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation under CEQA.

In addition, current CBC requirements pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life during earthquakes or from geologic or soil constraints. CBC requirements are applicable to all development. Therefore, they are also considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

The Project will result in only minor changes to the topography and surface relief features in the eastern portion of the site. These minor changes will be required in order to accommodate the Project buildings and improvements. In addition, the surrounding lands except to the north are vacant with no structures in the vicinity of the Project site except for Highway 74 along the southwest boundary of the property. The developed land uses north of the site are of similar low intensity (i.e., Camp Ronald McDonald, Hurkey Creek Campground, and Hurkey Creek Park).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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As designed and with regulatory compliance, the changes to the topography and ground surface relief features will be in keeping with the existing physical improvements adjacent to the Project site. Therefore, any impacts are less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*b) Create cut or fill slopes greater than 2:1 or higher than 10 feet?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

As indicated in Threshold 17.a, no cut or fill slopes greater than 2:1 or higher than 10 feet are being proposed in conjunction with the proposed Project.

Current CBC requirements (as implemented through County Ordinance No. 457) pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life due to geological constraints by ensuring that structures are constructed pursuant to applicable seismic design criteria for the region. CBC requirements are applicable to all development; therefore, they are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. In addition, the Project will be required to comply with the *Geo Investigation* and the report’s various recommendations.

The County of Riverside Building and Safety Department has standard conditions that apply to manufactured slopes which require the Project applicant to plant and irrigate all manufactured slopes equal to or greater than 3 feet in vertical height with drought tolerant grass or ground cover; slopes 15 feet or greater in vertical height shall also be planted with drought tolerant shrubs or trees in accordance with the requirements of Ordinance No. 457 and the current CBC. With regulatory compliance, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*c) Result in grading that affects or negates subsurface sewage disposal systems?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project site is currently vacant and is not served by either piped sewer or subsurface septic systems. The Percolation Testing and Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Investigation indicated portions of the site have shallow groundwater, on the order of 7 to 10 feet below ground surface in some areas. As a result of the shallow groundwater, the use of a typical conventional septic system with leach field is not feasible.

The Project will utilize an Aerobic Treatment System (ATS) with shallow near surface GeoFlow drip lines for its sewage disposal which will be located in the eastern portion of the site. This is mainly due to the presence of shallow groundwater. Please note that the area of the shallow subsurface GeoFlow drip lines is delineated on the project plans. These areas will remain native and undisturbed.

The plans and related data of the proposed ATS system have already been submitted and approved by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH has determined this system would be able to provide adequate wastewater service to the proposed Project, including day/weekend events and other special activities. The ATS system has been designed to remain under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold which would allow this system to remain under the regulation of the County rather than the regional board. Effluent from this system will be dispersed in the garden area using GeoFlow drip irrigation. There will be no direct effluent discharges to the creek and all system components will be located at a minimum of 100 feet from



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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the identified 100-year flood zone on the site. This system will meet the design requirements of the Uniform Plumbing Code and County DEH. The ATS system is sized to have an average daily flow of 8,900 gpd as shown in the calculations section of the ATS System Design documentation.

The County of Riverside Building and Safety Department has standard conditions that will prevent impacts on existing or proposed septic systems. These are considered regulatory compliance and not project unique mitigation. No portion of the proposed Project will result in grading that affects or negates subsurface sewage disposal systems. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**18. Soils**

a) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1803.5.3 of the California Building Code (2022), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (**Geo Investigation, Appendix E1**); *ATS System Design*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022 (**Appendix L**); *OWTS Report*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021 (**Appendix M**); United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2022); *Preliminary Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, The Ridge Wellness, Inc., Mountain Center*, prepared by Searl Biological, 12-17-2021 (*MSHCP Analysis, Appendix C*); and Ordinance No. 457.

**Findings of Fact:**

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

**Less Than Significant Impact**

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Project site is underlain by two soil associations as generally described below, and there are no hydric, clay, or saline-alkali soils series on the site:

- **Oak glen-rush families complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes (OmD):** A well-drained complex with alluvium parent material. The depth to the restrictive feature and water table is more than 80-inches. The frequency of ponding, according to the NRCS, is none. Approximately

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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80 percent of the site is underlain by these soils.

- **Oak Glen-Morical, very deep families complex, 2 to 30 percent slopes (SoDE):** A well-drained complex with alluvium parent material. The depth to the restrictive feature and water table is more than 80-inches. These soils would have no frequency of ponding according to the NRCS. Approximately 20 percent of the site is underlain by these soils.

These soils are relatively sandy and granitic in nature and lack thickness due to shallow underlying bedrock (also granitic in nature). These soils are subject to moderate erosion from water and wind, depending on the velocity of the eroding force (i.e., how much water is flowing and how fast it is flowing or how fast the wind is blowing). The onsite soil data from the NRCS is supported by the onsite subsurface exploration that was conducted as part of the *Geo Investigation* in 2022.

It should be noted Hurkey Creek crosses the center of the site flowing from north to south. The creek’s headwaters are located approximately 5.5 miles north of the site near Tahquitz Peak. In 2019, the west-facing slope of the San Jacinto Mountains experienced high volume rain events and the resulting flows caused closure of Hwy 74 for over a year. These flows caused the onsite bed and bank of Hurkey Creek to extend all the way to its 100-year floodplain limits. Other than the creekbed, the rest of the site is relatively flat and surface runoff generally flows toward the creek then offsite to the south. There is evidence of historical erosion in and along the creek bed but not generally in the flatter portions of the site away from the creek.

Site grading will create the potential for the proposed Project to result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, mainly in the eastern portion of the site. The County of Riverside Building and Safety Department has standard conditions, as they apply to manufactured slopes. In addition, wind erosion will be minimized through mandated soil stabilization measures by South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust), such as daily watering.

Lastly, water erosion will be prevented through the County’s standard, mandated, erosion control practices required pursuant to the 2022 CBC, and the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, or sandbags. Once the proposed buildings and other improvements are in place and maintained, there should be little or no ongoing erosion as a result of the Project.

Based upon the required compliance with established regulations and County ordinances, impacts related to soil erosion will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1803.5.3 of the California Building Code (2022), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Preliminary laboratory test results as part of the *Geo Investigation* indicate that the soils onsite exhibit expansion indices that are less than 20. As indicated in Section 1803.5.3 of the 2022 CBC, these soils are considered non-expansive and can be used for foundations but not backfilling (p. 26-27 and 33, Petra 2022). Consistent with Ordinance No. 457, each building pad will be evaluated for its expansive potential and foundation design parameters will be incorporated.

CBC requirements (as implemented through Ordinance No. 457) pertaining to new development and construction will minimize the potential for structural failure or loss of life during earthquakes by

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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ensuring that structures are constructed pursuant to applicable seismic design criteria for the region. Current CBC requirements are applicable to all development; therefore, they are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. The Project will also be required to implement the recommendations of the Geo Investigation. This is also considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation.

Once graded per the *Geo Investigation*, the Project would not be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1803.5.3 of the California Building Code (2022), creating substantial risks to life or property; with adherence to listed regulations and County ordinances, impacts would remain less than significant level and no mitigation is required.

c) *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The NRCS indicates the Project site is underlain by two soil associations which are generally granitic and sandy in nature. In addition, the *Geo Investigation* determined that portions of the site have shallow groundwater, on the order of 7 to 10 feet below ground surface in some areas. The Project will utilize an Aerobic Treatment System (ATS) with shallow near surface GeoFlow drip lines for its sewage disposal which will be located in the eastern portion of the site. This is mainly due to the presence of shallow groundwater. The area of the shallow subsurface GeoFlow drip lines is delineated on the project plans. These areas will remain native and undisturbed.

The plans and related data of the proposed ATS system have already been submitted and approved by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH has determined this system would be able to provide adequate wastewater service to the proposed Project, including day/weekend events and other special activities. The ATS system has been designed to remain under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold which would allow this system to remain under the regulation of the County rather than the regional board. Effluent from this system will be dispersed in the garden area using GeoFlow drip irrigation. There will be no direct effluent discharges to the creek and all system components will be located at a minimum of 100 feet from the identified 100-year flood zone on the site. This system will meet the design requirements of the Uniform Plumbing Code and County DEH. The ATS system is sized to have an average daily flow of 8,900 gpd as shown in the calculations section of the ATS System Design documentation.

The advanced on-site wastewater treatment must meet National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) performance standards of 40 and 245. All pretreatment equipment must be certified by the NSF as well as the County’s Health Department permitting. All of these requirements are covered by conditions of approval which is considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**19. Wind Erosion and Blowsand from Project either on or off site.**

a) Be impacted by or result in an increase in wind erosion and blowsand, either on or off site?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A)*; previous Riverside County General Plan Figure S-8 “Wind Erosion Susceptibility Map;” Ordinance No. 484 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside for the Control of Blowing Sand); and Ordinance No. 457.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Be impacted by or result in an increase in wind erosion and blowsand, either on or off site?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project site is located in an area of “Moderate Wind Erosion” rating. Implementation of the proposed Project may be impacted by or result in an increase in wind erosion either on or off site. However, the site is not in an area identified as a “Blowsand” area according to the previous County General Plan Safety Element Figure S-8 (the most current Safety Element from 2021 no longer contains a wind hazards map).

All grading shall conform to the California Building Code, Ordinance No. 457, and all other relevant laws, rules, and regulations governing grading in Riverside County and prior to commencing any grading which includes 50 or more cubic yards, the applicant shall obtain a grading permit from the Building and Safety Department. This is a standard condition for the County of Riverside and is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

The Project will be required to implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to address wind erosion and blow sand as well as potential water erosion during the construction process. The SWPPP is required by the California Regional Water Quality Board and the NPDES General Permit Number R8-2010-0033 (County MS4 Permit) for the Santa Ana River Watershed. As part of the SWPPP, the Project will implement construction BMPs per the California Stormwater Quality Association Construction BMP Handbook that are used to control wind erosion and blow sand, as well as stormwater runoff. This is a standard condition for the County of Riverside as well as compliance with required state regulations and is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

With the inclusion of these standard conditions, any impacts from implementation of the proposed Project related to an increase in wind erosion and blowsand, either on- or off-site, will remain less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** Would the Project:

**20. Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

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

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Ranch Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 11-19-2021 (AQ/GHG Study, **Appendix B**); County of Riverside, Climate Action Plan Update, November 2019.

**Note: Any tables or figures in this section are from the AQ/GHG Study, unless otherwise noted.**

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

Following the State’s adoption of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) in 2006, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) developed a climate change scoping plan that included directives for local governments to reduce GHG emissions associated with land use 15 percent below baseline levels by 2020. The passage of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, marked a watershed moment in California’s history. By requiring in law, a sharp reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, California set the stage for its transition to a sustainable, low carbon future. AB 32 is the first program in the country to take a comprehensive, long-term approach to addressing climate change, and does so in a way that aims to improve the environment and natural resources while maintaining a robust economy.

The County adopted its first Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2015 that included GHG inventories of community-wide and municipal sources using the baseline data for the year 2008. The 2015 CAP included the GHG reduction target of 15 percent below 2008 levels by 2020. The inventory baseline year 2008, was established as a starting point against which other inventories may be compared and targets may be set and was the earliest year with a full emissions inventory. As recommended in the AB 32 Scoping Plan, the County had set a target to reduce emissions back to 1990 levels by the year 2020. Based on the County’s socio-economic growth projections per the 2015 General Plan Update, this target was calculated as a 15 percent decrease from 2008 levels by 2020 and was determined sufficient for the County to meet the AB 32 target. The CAP Update sets a target to reduce community-wide GHG emission emissions by 15 percent from 2008 levels by 2020, 49 percent by 2030, and 83 percent by 2050. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) Scoping Plan outlines the reduction strategies designed to meet the State-wide reduction goal of AB 32.

The implementation mechanisms for the CAP/CAP Update are the Screening Tables for New Development. The Screening Tables allow new development projects a streamlined option for complying with CEQA requirements for addressing GHG emissions. Additionally, Riverside County’s Climate Action Plan details policies to reduce emissions from municipal and community-wide sources, including emissions from existing buildings and new development.

Projects have the option of preparing a project-specific technical analysis to quantify and mitigate GHG emissions. A threshold level above 3,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>)

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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per year will be used to identify projects that require the use of Screening Tables or a project-specific technical analysis to quantify and mitigate project emissions. The screening tables are setup similar to a checklist, with points allocated to certain elements that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If a project garners 100 points (by including enough GHG reducing elements), then the project is consistent with Riverside County’s plan for reducing emissions.

Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions are estimated for on-site and off-site construction activity using CalEEMod 2020.4.0 which was the most current version when the study was prepared. **Table 20-1, Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions**, shows that construction greenhouse gas emissions, including equipment and worker vehicle emissions, would be 84.47 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e when averaged over 30 years. Those emissions are then added to the long-term operational emissions pursuant to SCAQMD recommendations.

Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions for the proposed Project were estimated for on-site and off-site operational activity using CalEEMod. Greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources, area sources and energy sources are shown in **Table 20-1**.

**Table 20-1  
Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Emission Source	GHG Emissions (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/yr.) <sup>1</sup>
Mobile Source	289.59
Energy Source	197.46
Area Source	<0.01
Water	85.94
Waste	11.42
Construction (30-year amortization)	84.47
<b>Total Annual Emissions</b>	<b>668.88</b>
Riverside County CAP Screening Threshold	3,000
<b>Exceed CAP Threshold?</b>	<b>No</b>

<sup>1</sup> MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr. = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents per year.

The analysis first compares the Project’s GHG emissions to the SCAQMD’s Tier 3 approach, which limits GHG emissions to 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e. As shown in **Table 20-1**, Project GHG emissions are expected to be 668.88 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/year which is well below the County’s 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e threshold based on the unmitigated business as usual scenario. Therefore, the proposed Project will not

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

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

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Riverside County CAP has been adopted to ensure the County meets the State-wide policies for reducing GHG emissions, as required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32).

A threshold level above 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year is used to identify projects that require the use of Screening Tables or a project-specific technical analysis to quantify and mitigate project emissions. The Screening Tables allow new development projects a streamlined option for complying with CEQA requirements for addressing GHG emissions. The screening tables are setup similar to a checklist, with points allocated to certain elements that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If a project garners 100 points, then the project is considered to be consistent with Riverside County’s plan (and the broader state-wide policies) for reducing GHG emissions.

As shown in **Table 20-1**, the proposed Project is expected to generate 668.88 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e which is much less than 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Therefore, the Project would be in compliance with the CAP and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

The Project will also be required to comply with the mandatory requirements of Title 24 part 11 of the California Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and Title 24 Part 6 Building Efficiency Standards to further reduce energy usage and GHG emissions. CALGreen and building code compliance are standard County conditions and considered to be regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA.

Therefore, with regulatory compliance the proposed Project will not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and the impact is considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** Would the Project:

**21. Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

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?

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter (1/4) mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Phase I Environmental Site Assessment*, prepared by GeoTek, Inc., 6-16-2020 (*Phase I ESA, Appendix F*); Mountain Communities Evacuation Routes Map; Project Plans (**Appendix K**); Hemet Unified School District website; GEOTRACKER website; *The Ridge Guest Ranch Fire Protection Plan, APN 568-070-021*, prepared by Firewise 2000, LLC, 6-12-2023 (*FPP, Appendix H*); and The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor website.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The proposed Project could result in a significant hazard to the public if the Project includes the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or places housing near a facility which routinely transports, uses, or disposes of hazardous materials.

The Project site is located in an unincorporated mountainous area of central Riverside County identified in the *Map My County* as approximately 3 miles southeast of the community of Mountain Center, and approximately 1/3 of a mile northeast of Hemet Lake. The Project site is mostly surrounded by large expanses of vacant lands that are designated as Open Space – Recreation (OS-REC), Open Space – Water (OS-W), Open Space Rural (OS-R), and Open Space - Conservation Habitat (CH) land use designations.

The Project proposes to repurpose a former agricultural property to accommodate The Ridge Guest Ranch.

The proposed Project does not place “for sale” or “for lease/rent” housing near any hazardous materials facilities. However, the Project does propose a facility that would provide 30 guest rooms, 6 tents, and 3 wellness cabins; there will be guests and staff on-site.

The routine use, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials is most typical of industrial uses that require hazardous materials for manufacturing operations. The proposed Project does not propose or facilitate any activity involving significant use, routine transport, or disposal of hazardous substances as part of the proposed use.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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During construction, there would be a minor level of transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes that are typical of construction projects. This would include fuels and lubricants for construction machinery, coating materials, etc. Routine construction control measures and best management practices for hazardous materials storage, application, waste disposal, accident prevention and clean-up, etc. would be sufficient to reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

With regard to Project operation, widely used hazardous materials commonly used at camps or guest ranch facilities with administrative/custodial functions may include cleaners, pesticides, and food waste. The remnants of these and other products are disposed of as household hazardous waste that are prohibited or discouraged from being disposed of at local landfills.

Regular operation and cleaning of these uses would not result in significant impacts involving use, storage, transport or disposal of hazardous wastes and substances. Use of common household hazardous materials and their disposal does not present a substantial health risk to the community. The Project would not generate significant impacts associated with the routine transport and use of hazardous materials or wastes, and no mitigation is required.

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

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The *Phase I ESA* did not reveal evidence of any recognized environmental conditions (RECs) or concerns in connection with the Project site.

During construction, there is a potential for accidental release of petroleum products from vehicles and equipment that would pose a significant hazard to people and the environment. Impacts may occur during construction; however, with the incorporation of standard conditions, such as the SWPPP, any impacts will remain less than significant. These standard conditions are applicable to all development; therefore, they are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

Hazardous materials anticipated during operations are anticipated to be those most commonly associated with camp or guest ranch facilities (with administrative and custodial functions), which include cleaning products, petroleum products, etc. These types of hazardous materials are not potentially hazardous to large numbers of people, especially at the scale they would be stored and used in conjunction with the Project’s proposed use.

Some use of potentially hazardous materials, such as cleaning agents, may be used onsite but it is not expected that maintenance of the drainage facilities and ornamental landscaped areas will require hazardous chemicals. The use of such materials will be in accordance with state and federal regulations pertaining to their use. Therefore, no phase of the Project would 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. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) *Would the Project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan?*

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

The Project is within a High Fire Area, and in a potential flood hazard zone. Highway 74 is a main pathway for this portion of the San Jacinto wilderness, and thus serves as the evacuation route, southerly to Garner Valley and northerly to Idyllwild/Hemet. Therefore, given the Project site’s location off of Highway 74 and Hemet Lake Drive, there is a potential to interfere with an emergency response or evacuation plan during construction. It should be noted that the Project does not take direct access of Highway 74, but via Apple Canyon Road. Other than new driveway access points, the Project will not expand or make any improvements to Apple Canyon Road or Highway 74 as part of the Project construction. Therefore, access to the established evacuation route will be improved, not diminished, as part of the Project. Since the Project takes access off of Apple Canyon Road, it is not anticipated that construction activities will impact Highway 74.

Control of access would ensure emergency access to the site and Project area during construction through the submittal and approval of a traffic control plan (TCP). The TCP is designed to lessen and abate any construction circulation impacts. This is a standard condition applicable to all development; therefore, it is not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

The Project will introduce additional persons into the area which has high fire risks. Therefore, a Fire Protection Plan (*FPP*) was prepared to evaluate the proposed guest ranch to ensure it will not expose people or structures to significant fire risks or hazards. The *FPP* takes into account the property’s location, topography, geology, combustible vegetation (fuel types), climatic conditions and fire history. It also considers fire flow and its water supply, access, structure ignitability and fire resistive building materials, fire protection systems and equipment, impacts to existing emergency services, defensible space, and vegetation management.

The *FPP* proposes fuel modification requirements to effectively reduce the potential exposure of people and structures onsite from a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires. The *FPP* recommends implementation and maintenance of the following four (4) Fuel Treatment Zones as described in the 2019 California Fire Code, each with their own characteristics, required landscaping, and required maintenance:

- **Fuel Treatment Zone 1**, the Immediate Zone, is the area from the exterior wall surface of the building extending 5-feet on a horizontal plane. The intent of Zone 1 is to create a landscape absent of all combustible materials. This zone includes the level graded area under and around all decks and requires the most stringent wildland fire fuel reduction and maintenance. This area shall be kept clear of combustibles, plant-based landscaping mulch, and all large shrubs and trees. It may have a few nonwoody plants, generally confined to pots or containers, that are low growing. Plants that grow in water are also a good choice. No plants shall be grown beneath windows or adjacent to doorways. The soil surface may be bare ground or covered with hardscape features such as pavers, gravel, concrete, rock, or other non-combustible material. Water features and statuary developed from non-combustible materials are also a good choice for this zone.
- **Fuel Treatment Zone 2** – Owner Maintained Intermediate Zone, is commonly called the defensible space zone for fire suppression forces and protects structures from radiant and

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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convective heat. Zone 2 consists of the area from 5'-50' from the exterior wall surface extending out in a horizontal plane. Within the zone, flammable native vegetation shall be removed and replanted with drought tolerant, fire resistive, irrigated, plantings as approved by the Riverside County FD. (see Appendix A). Firewood shall not be stacked under tree canopy and stored at least 10 feet from property lines. Zone 2 fuel treatments are measured from the exterior walls of the structure or from the most distal point of a combustible projection, an attached accessory structure, or an accessory structure within 10 feet of a habitable structure. It provides the best protection against the high radiant heat produced by a wildfire and a generally cleared area in which fire suppression forces can operate during wildfire events.

- **Fuel Treatment Zone 3A** - the Extended Zone, is the area beyond Zone 2, from 50'-100' in a horizontal plane. All highly combustible native vegetation is excluded within the zone. Zone 3A may be partially, or non-irrigated, depending upon the plant species selected for planting. Irrigation shall not be required for natural slopes when there is a danger of slope failure. The goal within Zone 3A is the reduction or selective clearing of existing native vegetation and dense chaparral by 50% and the planting and maintenance of only approved species.
- **Fuel Treatment Zone 3B** – Bio-retention Basin - Owner Maintained, is located on the southeastern corner of the property, west of the planned solar farm and planter areas. This area, as part of the Water Quality Management Plan, has been designed to reduce storm water and soil runoff from the site. The basin will be planted with native plants materials and maintained to the required maintenance and landscaping standards listed for Zone 3A. Within Zone 3B will be thinning zones beginning at the edge of Zone 2 and including all natural and manufactured slopes. The specified intent is to achieve and maintain an overall 50% reduction in the canopy and removal of 100% of the dead and dying plant material following the growth cycle of the vegetation. Removal of prohibited and invasive species is permitted. The Project owner(s) is responsible for the maintenance of the area to Zone 3B standards as needed.

The *FPP* also includes supplemental fuel treatment zones for the onsite roadways, setback areas from the adjacent U.S. Forest Service land, Hurkey Creek setback zone, permanent markers for each zone, and a Shelter-In-Place (SIP) location and plan for how onsite sheltering will be implemented if needed. The *FPP* lists construction practices and materials to minimize fire risk, specifications for the onsite water systems (domestic and fire) including two onsite wells (one of them new with this Project), and three water storage tanks. three (3) Ignition Zones as described in the current California Fire Code:

With implementation of the *FPP* as a type of emergency response plan (see **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**), the Project will not result in a significant risk to persons or property on the Project site from wildfire.

The Project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant with implementation of the recommended mitigation.

- d) *Would the Project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter (1/4) mile of an existing or proposed school?*

**No Impact**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The Project area is served by the Hemet Unified School District (HUSD). The schools that serve the Project area are as follows:

- Hamilton Elementary School (grades K-8) located at 57550 Mitchell Rd., in the unincorporated community of Anza approximately 15.3 miles (driving distance) south of the site;
- Hamilton High School (grades 9-12) located at 57430 Mitchell Rd., in the unincorporated community of Anza approximately 15.3 miles (driving distance) south of the site.

There are no existing or proposed schools located within one-quarter mile of the Project site. There are public facilities in the surrounding area where young children may be present at various times of the year (i.e., Hemet Lake Campground, Hurkey Creek Campground, and Ronald McDonald Campground). However, the Project is not expected to emit or result in the release of any hazardous materials into the environment which could affect these children (see also discussion in Threshold 21(a)). The nature of the Project is such that non-hazardous materials are expected to be used to the extent possible for activities on this site.

Based on this information, implementation of the Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

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

**No Impact**

The California State Waterboards GEOTRACKER site provides information regarding Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, Other Cleanup Sites, Land Disposal Sites, Military Sites, Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) Sites, Permitted Underground Storage Tank (UST) Facilities, Monitoring Wells, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Cleanup Sites and DTSC Hazardous Waste Permit Sites.

According to the GEOTRACKER site, there are no active or open cases involving Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, Other Cleanup Sites, Land Disposal Sites, Military Sites, WDR Sites, Permitted UST Facilities, Monitoring Wells, DTSC Cleanup Sites and DTSC Hazardous Waste Permit Sites on the proposed Project site, or within two (2) miles of the Project site. Detailed information is shown on **Figure 21-1, Geotracker Site**.

Likewise, the DTSC's EnviroStor site does not show any active Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites located within a 2-mile radius of the proposed Project site. This information was verified at the web-link cited in the sources, and shown on **Figure 21-2, EnviroStor Site**.

These conclusions are supported by the information contained in the *Phase I ESA*. The Project is not 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.

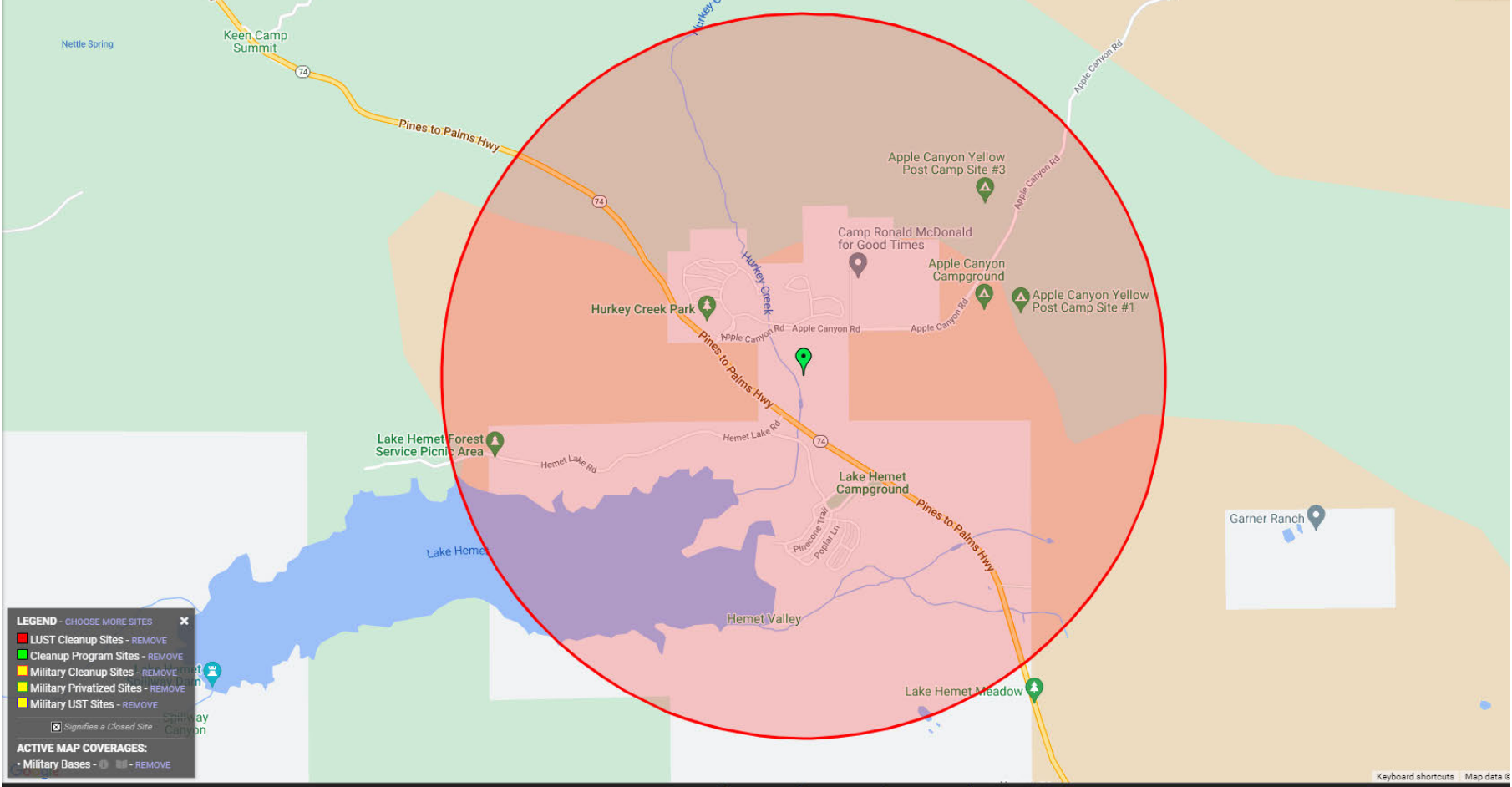
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Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Based upon the available data, there is no evidence to support that hazardous wastes or contamination would be present on the Project site and, therefore, would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

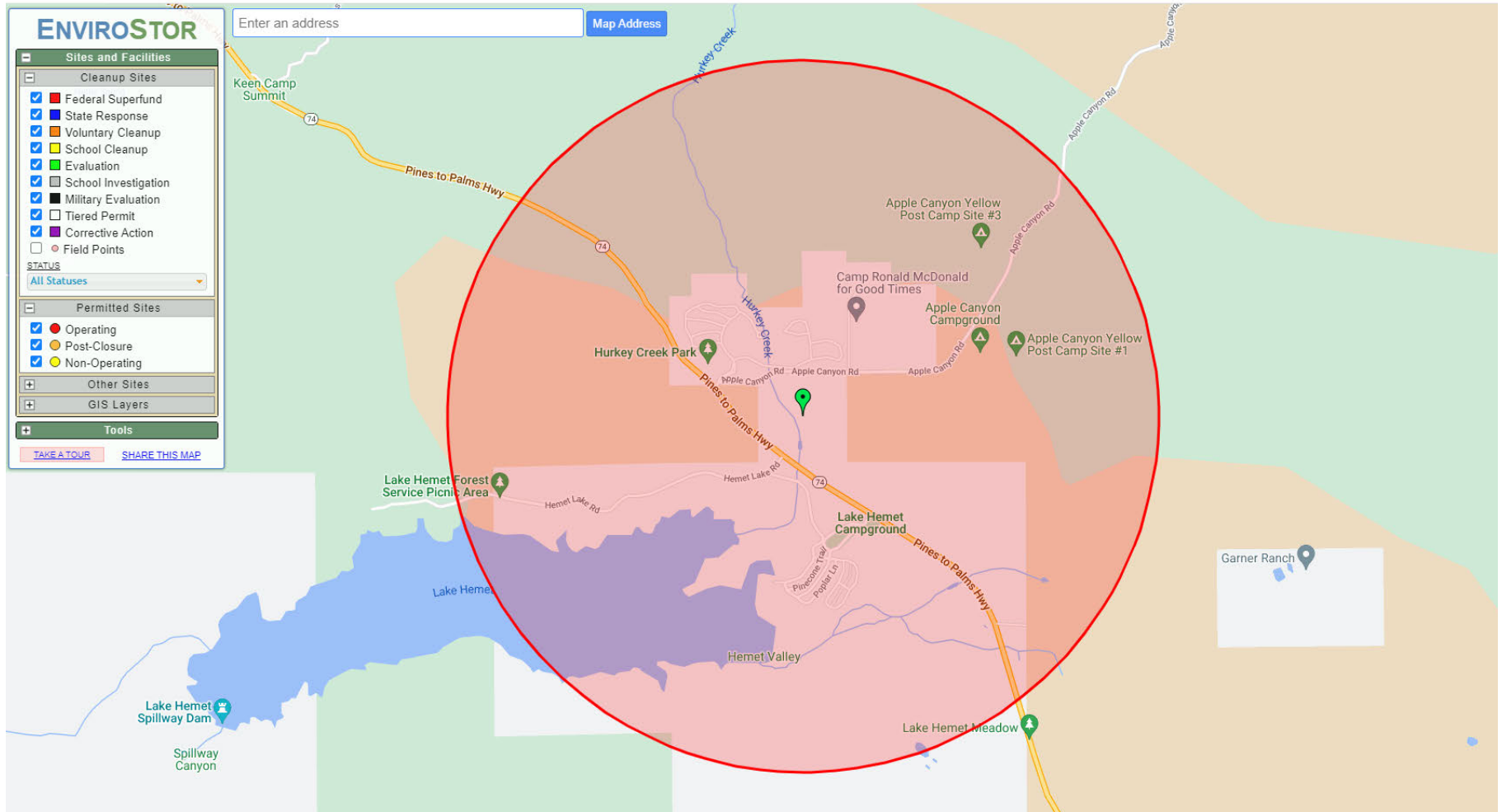
**FIGURE 21-1  
GeoTracker Site**




Source: GeoTracker <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=39750+De+Portola+Rd%2C+Temecula%2C+CA+92592>

 SITE

**FIGURE 21-2  
Envirostor Site**



Source: Envirostor <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=39750+De+Portola+Rd%2C+Temecula%2C+CA+92592>

 SITE



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Mitigation:**

**MM-FIRE-1 Fire Protection Plan.** Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall demonstrate the facility has implemented all recommendations of the *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* prepared for the Project by Firewise 2000, LLC dated 6-12-2023 or subsequent County-approved version. The *FPP* includes but is not limited to the creation of four onsite Fuel Treatment Zones for fuel management, a shelter in place plan for guests and employees if necessary, during a wildfire event, non-treatment areas, construction material restrictions, and water system requirements. The *FPP* shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Fire Marshal.

**Monitoring:** To be monitored through the Certificate of Occupancy Permit Process and site inspections by Riverside County Building and Safety Department and the County Fire Marshal shall be included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project to assure its implementation.

**22. Airports**

a) Result in an inconsistency with an Airport Master Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require review by the Airport Land Use Commission?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two (2) miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, or heliport, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A)*; Riverside County General Plan Figure S-20 “Airport Locations; AirNav.com website; and Google Earth.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project result in an inconsistency with an Airport Master Plan?*

**No Impact**

The Project site is not located in an area which is governed by an airport master plan. The closest airport is Palm Springs International Airport which is located approximately thirteen and a half (13.5) miles northeast of the Project site. It should be noted that the Garner Private Airfield is approximately 1/2 mile to the east of the Project, but it has been abandoned and is no longer in operation. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the proposed Project area. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project require review by the Airport Land Use Commission?*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**No Impact**

Please reference the discussion in Threshold 22.a. The Project site is not located in an area which is governed by an airport land use plan; therefore, review by an airport land use commission is not required. This criterion is not applicable to the Project. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

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

**No Impact**

Please reference the discussion in Threshold 22.a. The Project site is not located in an area which is governed by an airport master plan. Therefore, this criterion is not applicable to the Project. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

- d) *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, or heliport, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?*

**No Impact**

The closest private airstrip is the Lake Riverside Airport which is located approximately 12 miles southwest of the Project site; the closest heliport is at the Hemet Valley Hospital located approximately 17.5 miles northwest of the Project site. These distances are out of the immediate vicinity of the Project Site.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the proposed Project area from a private airstrip, or heliport. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** Would the Project:

**23. Water Quality Impacts**

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk the release of pollutants due to Project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Revised Planning Level Geotechnical Assessment, The Ridge, Lake Hemet Area, Riverside County*, prepared by Petra Geosciences, Inc., 10-5-2022 (**Appendix E1**); *Ridge Wellness Center Water System, Preliminary Technical Report*, prepared by Specialized Utilities Services Program, 4-24-2023 (**Appendix G1**); *Well Inspection Report*, prepared by Heritage Well Service, 4-8-2021 (**Appendix G2**); *Well Sampling Analytical Report*, prepared by Babcock Laboratories, Inc., 8-3-2021 (**Appendix G3**); *Project-Specific Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023 (**Appendix G4**); *Preliminary Hydrology and Hydraulics Report for The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023 (**Appendix G5**); FEMA FIRM website, Firmette mapping; **Figure 5, Landscape Plan**, provided in Section I of this IS; Ordinance No. 458 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Regulating Special Flood Hazard Areas and Implementing the National Flood Insurance Program); Ordinance No. 754 (As Amended through 754.2; An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Amending Ordinance No. 754 Establishing Stormwater/Urban Runoff Management and Discharge Controls); Riverside County General Plan, Safety Element, Figure 4 *Flood Hazard Zone*, and Figure 5 *Dam Hazard Inundation*; Riverside County General Plan, Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan, Figure 10, *REMAP Flood Hazard Zone*; Project Plans (**Appendix K**); ATS System Design, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022 (**Appendix L**); OWTS Report, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021 (**Appendix M**); and Map My County (**Appendix A**).

**Note:** Any tables or figures in this section are from the *WQMP* and/or *Hydrology Study*, unless otherwise noted.

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the framework for regulating municipal storm water discharges (construction and operational impacts) via the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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System (NPDES) program. A project would have an impact on surface water quality if discharges associated with the project would create pollution, contamination, or nuisance as defined in Water Code Section 13050, or that cause regulatory standards to be violated as defined in the applicable NPDES storm water permit or Water Quality Control Plan for a receiving water body.

For the purpose of this specific issue, a significant impact could occur if the Project would discharge water that does not meet the quality standards of the agencies which regulate surface water quality and water discharge into storm water drainage systems. Significant impacts could also occur if the Project does not comply with all applicable regulations with regard to surface water quality as governed by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). These regulations include preparation of a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) to reduce potential post-construction water quality impacts.

According to the *WQMP*, the Project site is located in the Santa Ana River Watershed within the Hemet Lake Hydrological Sub-area which is in turn part of the San Jacinto Valley Hydrological Sub-Area with a size of approximately 36.1 gross acres. **Table 23-1, Downstream Receiving Waters**, shows the receiving water bodies that are downstream of the Project site. The table also shows their federal CWA Section 303(d) listed impairments in terms of water quality, as well as their designated beneficial uses such as agriculture (AGR), municipal water supply (MUN), groundwater recharge (GWR), power generation (POW), contact and non-contact recreation (REC1 and REC2), cold freshwater habitat (COLD), warm freshwater habitat (WARM), fish spawning habitat (SPWN), wildlife habitat (WILD), and habitat for listed or sensitive species (RARE). The *WQMP* concludes the Project will require coverage by the Statewide Construction General Permit to adequately protect area water quality. All new development in the County is required to comply with provisions of the NPDES program, including Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) and MS4 Order No. R8-2010-0033, NPDES Permit No. CAS618033, as enforced by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board.

**Table 23-1  
Downstream Receiving Waters**

Receiving Waters	EPA Approved 303(d) List Impairments	Designated Beneficial Uses
Hurkey Creek	Not Applicable	MUN, AGR, GWR, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, WILD
Lake Hemet	Not Applicable	MUN, AGR, GWR, POW, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, COLD, WILD, SPWN
San Jacinto River	Escherichia coli (E. coli), Fecal Coliform, Nitrate, Dissolved Oxygen, Toxicity, Turbidity	AGR, GWR, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, WILD
Canyon Lake (Railroad Canyon Reservoir)	Nutrients	MUN, AGR, GWR, REC1, REC2, COMM, WARM, WILD
Lake Elsinore	DDT, Nutrients, Organic Enrichment/Low Dissolved Oxygen, PCB, Toxicity	GWR, REC1, REC2, COMM, WARM, WILD, RARE

The Project site is located on the south side of Apple Canyon Road just east of Highway 74 in the San Jacinto Mountains. Elevations onsite vary from 4,445 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along the northern boundary down to 4,334 feet AMSL along the southern boundary. The Project proposes the construction and operation of an eco-conscious private guest ranch with guest cabins and guest

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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tents, wellness cabins, wellness basecamp, activity hub and lap pool, dining area, health focused commercial kitchen, working greenhouse, apiary and fruit trees will contribute to a fully sustainable facility for guests to use and enjoy within the natural setting of the property.

The ranch Project will offer a variety of self-development therapies and recreational activities. Recreational activities available to the guests will include but are not limited to hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and water activities at Lake Hemet. In addition, guests will be able to participate in outdoor cultural and environmental educational activities as part of the experience at the ranch. Onsite improvements include guest cabins and tents, administration and other support and activity buildings, pervious parking areas, landscaping, and Class II base roadway for fire access. The development will preserve the existing onsite drainage pattern by ultimately draining stormwater runoff toward Hurkey Creek.

Approximately 36.1 acres of the site (almost 90 percent) will remain as natural open space. The Project will retain all the natural vegetation and all the existing large pine trees on the site. The 36.1-acre site currently has 100% pervious surfaces (0% impervious) and the Project proposes to create 3.5 acres of impervious surfaces in the eastern portion of the site as part of the guest ranch facilities. Therefore, development of the Project will increase the impervious surfaces on the site to 9.9% (3.5 acres divided by 36.1 acres). The onsite drainage conditions depicted on **Figure 23-1, Proposed Condition Hydrology Map**. The proposed Project development will utilize low impact development standards intended to preserve the natural topography of the Project site to the maximum extent possible and a combination of the landscaped areas and infiltration trenches are included in the Project design. It should be noted the *Hydro Study* and *WQMP* both used a slightly larger site area for drainage considerations (37.37 acres). The development Project is for 36.11 acres and the difference in acreage was the inclusion of a small amount of adjacent property that will remain vacant but contributes runoff to the Project site.

Hurkey Creek crosses the center of the site flowing from north to south. The creek’s headwaters are located approximately 5.5 miles north of the site near Tahquitz Peak. In 2019, the west-facing slope of the San Jacinto Mountains experienced high volume rain events and the resulting flows caused closure of Hwy 74 for over a year. These flows caused the onsite bed and bank of Hurkey Creek to extend all the way to its 100-year floodplain limits. Other than the creekbed, the rest of the site is relatively flat and surface runoff generally flows toward the creek then offsite to the south into Lake Hemet. There is evidence of historical erosion in and along the creek bed but not generally in the flatter portions of the site away from the creek.

According to the Project *WQMP*, the site is divided into four drainage management areas (DMA 1-4). Runoff from DMAs 1, 2 and 4 will be handled by Water Quality Basin 1 while DMA 3 is actually self-retaining and will not require an improved facility. **Table 23-2, Project Hydrology Conditions**, shows the post-development conditions for the site as well as the storage of the proposed detention basin per the Project *Hydrology Study* and *WQMP*.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Table 23-2  
Project Hydrology Conditions**

Drainage Area A (DMAs 1,2, & 4)	2-Year, 24-Hour Runoff (Q) cubic feet/second (cfs)	10-Year, 24-Hour Runoff (Q) cubic feet/second (cfs)
Pre-Development	0.5	1.4
Post-Development	1.8	3.0
Difference	+1.3	+1.6

Drainage Management Areas	Area (acres)	Design Capture Volume	Proposed Basin Storage
1, 2, 4	12.89	12,155.7 cf	12,200 cf (Basin 1)
3	24.48	RSR	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.37</b>	<b>12,155.7 cf</b>	<b>12,200 cf (Basin 1)</b>

Sources: Page 4, Hydrology Study and Table D.3, WQMP

cf = cubic feet RSR = Receiving Self-Retaining (no improved basin needed)

As shown in **Table 23-2**, the Project proposes one basin to protect water quality. DMA 3 is a self-retaining area while Basin 1 is a bioretention basin which will treat runoff from DMAs 1, 2, and 4. Basin 1 is slightly oversized (per **Table 23-2**) to prevent offsite hydromodification during the 2-year, 24-hour storm event. The *Hydrology Study* concludes this capacity is consistent with the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD) methodology based on the calculated difference in runoff hydrograph volume between the undeveloped and developed conditions (015-Flood Increased Runoff Criteria) for rural areas. Since the basin’s capacity is slightly greater than the design capture volume, there will be no increase in offsite runoff from the site as a result of Project development.

Since the Project involves more than one acre of ground disturbance, it is subject to NPDES permit requirements for the preparation and implementation of a project-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Adherence to NPDES permit requirements and the measures established in the SWPPP are routine actions conditioned by the County and will ensure applicable water quality standards are appropriately maintained during construction of the proposed Project.

The proposed Project has been reviewed and conditioned by the County Building Department and the County Transportation Department to mitigate any potential impacts as listed above through site design and the preparation of a WQMP and adherence to the requirements of the NPDES. These are standard conditions for the County of Riverside and are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

The Project will utilize an Aerobic Treatment System (ATS) with shallow near surface GeoFlow drip lines for its sewage disposal which will be located in the eastern portion of the site. This is mainly due to the presence of shallow groundwater. The area of the shallow subsurface GeoFlow drip lines is delineated on the project plans. These areas will remain native and undisturbed.

The plans and related data of the proposed ATS system have already been submitted and approved by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH has determined this system would be able to provide adequate wastewater service to the proposed Project, including day/weekend events and other special activities. The ATS system has been designed to remain under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold which would allow this system to remain under the regulation of the County rather than the regional board. Effluent from this system will be

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Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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dispersed in the garden area using GeoFlow drip irrigation. There will be no direct effluent discharges to the creek and all system components will be located at a minimum of 100 feet from the identified 100-year flood zone on the site. This system will meet the design requirements of the Uniform Plumbing Code and County DEH. The ATS system is sized to have an average daily flow of 8,900 gpd as shown in the calculations section of the ATS System Design documentation. There will be no impacts from this potential source of surface or groundwater contamination.

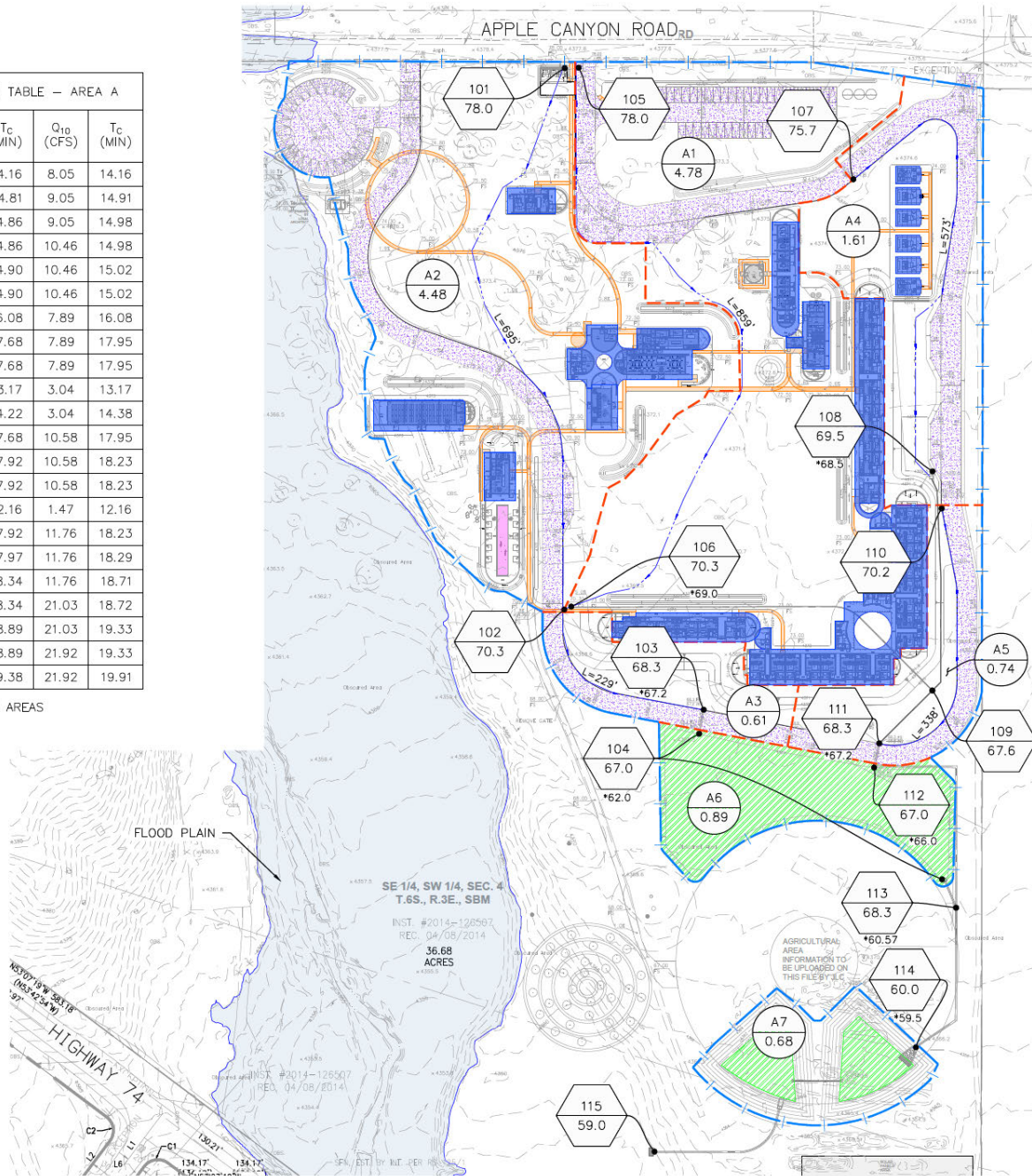
For the reasons outlined above, implementation of the proposed Project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.



**FIGURE 23-1  
Proposed Condition Hydrology Map**

HYDROLOGY SUMMARY TABLE – AREA A				
NODES	Q <sub>100</sub> (CFS)	T <sub>c</sub> (MIN)	Q <sub>10</sub> (CFS)	T <sub>c</sub> (MIN)
101-102	14.48	14.16	8.05	14.16
102-103	16.31	14.81	9.05	14.91
103-104	16.31	14.86	9.05	14.98
104-104	19.01	14.86	10.46	14.98
104-113	19.01	14.90	10.46	15.02
*113-113	19.01	14.90	10.46	15.02
105-106	14.22	16.08	7.89	16.08
106-109	14.22	17.68	7.89	17.95
*109-109	14.22	17.68	7.89	17.95
107-108	5.45	13.17	3.04	13.17
108-109	5.45	14.22	3.04	14.38
*108-109	19.05	17.68	10.58	17.95
109-111	19.05	17.92	10.58	18.23
*111-111	19.05	17.92	10.58	18.23
110-111	2.64	12.16	1.47	12.16
*110-111	21.19	17.92	11.76	18.23
111-112	21.19	17.97	11.76	18.29
112-113	21.19	18.34	11.76	18.71
*112-113	38.14	18.34	21.03	18.72
113-114	38.14	18.89	21.03	19.33
114-114	39.88	18.89	21.92	19.33
114-115	39.88	19.38	21.92	19.91

\* DENOTES CONFLUENCE AREAS



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) *Would the Project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The 36.1-acre site currently has 100% pervious surfaces (0% impervious) so at present essentially all the precipitation that falls on the Project site percolates back into the ground and into the local groundwater supply. The Project proposes to create 3.5 acres of impervious surfaces in the eastern portion of the site as part of the guest ranch facilities. Therefore, development of the Project will increase the impervious surfaces on approximately 10% of the site (3.5 acres divided by 36.1 acres) which may incrementally decrease runoff that would otherwise percolate back into the local groundwater. However, the *WQMP* indicates the Project will have a water quality basin that will allow percolation of a portion of the site runoff to percolate back into the ground. In addition, approximately 90 percent of the site will remain in its natural condition which will minimize the potential reduction in onsite runoff back into the local groundwater (see **Figure 23-2, *WQMP Site Plan***).

The Project site currently has an agricultural well onsite. To serve the new facilities, the new well will have to be reviewed and permitted by the County Department of Environmental Health and the State.

It should be noted the Project will have low intensity activities and low scale buildings (i.e., one-story) and is intended to be econ-friendly and environmentally conscious so it will be specifically designed to conserve water (i.e., low impact development or LID). The Project buildings will also be required to meet the County’s LID ordinance and state water conservation goals. Except in the northeast portion of the site proposed for Project development, the site will remain in its existing natural condition, including Hurkey Creek. Driveways and access roadways will be constructed of roller-compacted decomposed granite (DG) to the minimum widths required and on-site parking is being designed utilizing DG with the exception of ADA spaces which will be paved. DG walkways are being limited to those areas in the vicinity of the proposed ranch buildings. Where feasible, the runoff from the building roof areas will be directed to landscaped areas prior to entering the on-site storm drain system. Impervious areas have been designed to drain to localized landscaping and natural areas that have been designed as infiltration areas. Landscaping is designed per landscaped architectural plans consistent with County standards. The *WQMP* indicated the site has seasonally high groundwater so infiltration BMPs were not feasible in this location. However, the *WQMP* includes one bioretention basin with a volume of 12,200 cubic feet (cf) which exceeds the calculated design capture volume of 12,155.7 cf. This basin will collect runoff from the developed portion of the site and help reduce sediment and other potential pollutants to protect the water quality of the adjacent Hurkey Creek and downstream Lake Hemet.

As outlined above, no component of the proposed Project will substantially deplete or divert groundwater supplies. The Project design, as depicted on the Project plans and Project-specific *WQMP*, will allow for runoff in the developed portion of the site to infiltrate back into the ground and allow for groundwater recharge. This will help to offset any potential effects on groundwater recharge from impervious elements of the proposed Project.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit

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Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted). Impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

# FIGURE 23-2 WQMP Site Plan





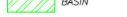



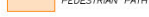
**DESIGN NOTES:**

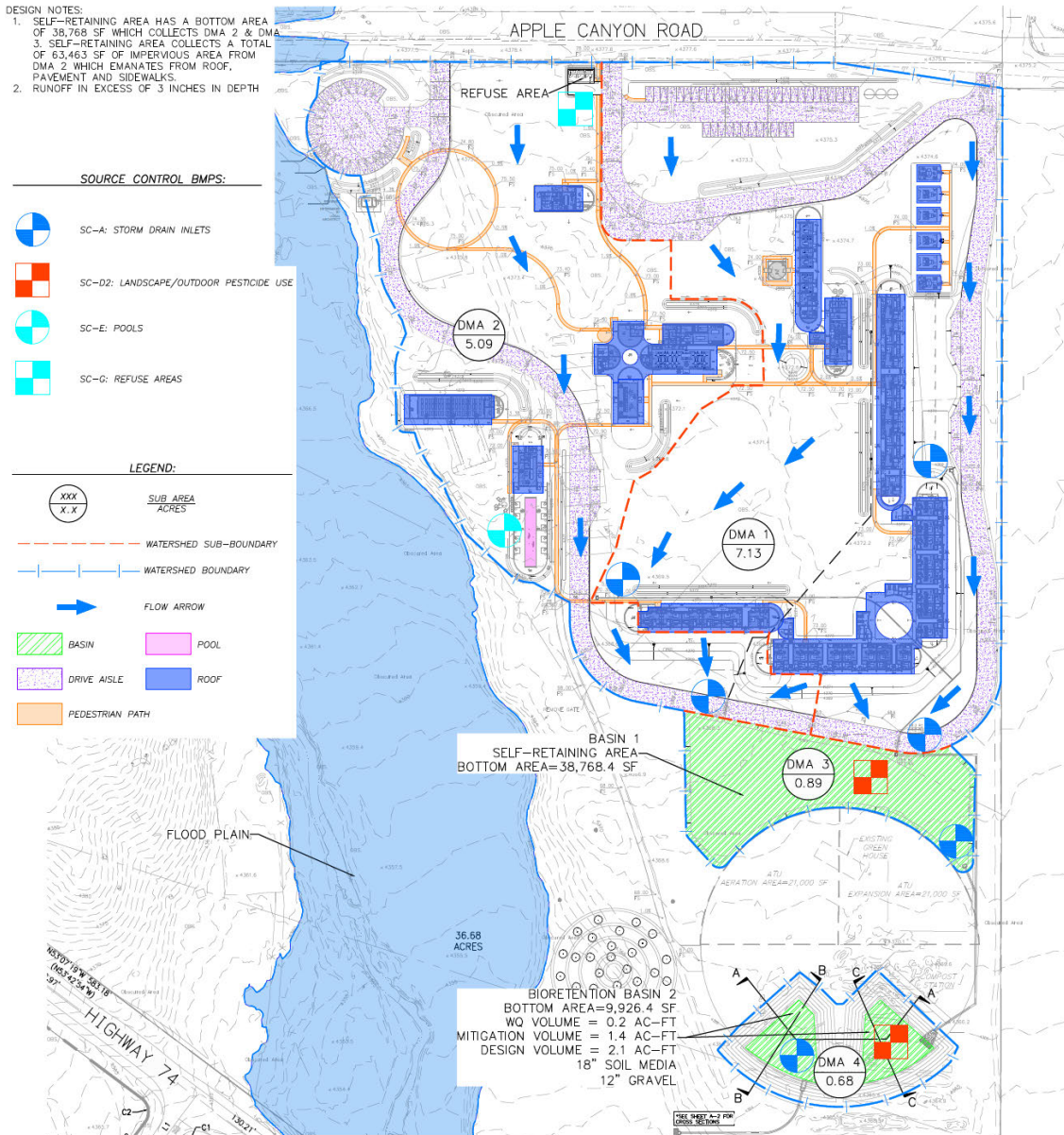
1. SELF-RETAINING AREA HAS A BOTTOM AREA OF 38,768 SF WHICH COLLECTS DMA 2 & DMA 3.
2. SELF-RETAINING AREA COLLECTS A TOTAL OF 63,463 SF OF IMPERVIOUS AREA FROM DMA 2 WHICH EMANATES FROM ROOF, PAVEMENT AND SIDEWALKS.
3. RUNOFF IN EXCESS OF 3 INCHES IN DEPTH

**SOURCE CONTROL BMPs:**

-  SC-A: STORM DRAIN INLETS
-  SC-D: LANDSCAPE/OUTDOOR PESTICIDE USE
-  SC-E: POOLS
-  SC-G: REFUSE AREAS

**LEGEND:**

-  SUB AREA ACRES
-  WATERSHED SUB-BOUNDARY
-  WATERSHED BOUNDARY
-  FLOW ARROW
-  BASIN
-  POOL
-  DRIVE AISLE
-  ROOF
-  PEDESTRIAN PATH



**BASIN 1**  
SELF-RETAINING AREA  
BOTTOM AREA=38,768.4 SF

**BIORETENTION BASIN 2**  
BOTTOM AREA=9,926.4 SF  
WQ VOLUME = 0.2 AC-FT  
MITIGATION VOLUME = 1.4 AC-FT  
DESIGN VOLUME = 2.1 AC-FT  
18" SOIL MEDIA  
12" GRAVEL

NOTE:  
WQ VOLUME = 7175 CF = 0.2 AC-FT

DMA AREA SUMMARY TABLE						
DMA	ROOF TOP AREA (SF)	SIDEWALK (SF)	ROAD	TOTAL IMPERVIOUS AREA (AC)	TOTAL AREA (AC)	IMPERVIOUS PERCENT
1	39,509.00	4,116.00	45,864.00	2.05	7.13	0.29%
2	17,725.00	15,042.00	30,696.00	1.46	5.09	0.29%
3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.89	0.00%
4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.68	0.00%



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- c) *Would the Project 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?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Please refer to the hydrology discussion set forth under Threshold 23.a. Hurkey Creek crosses the center of the site flowing from north to south. Other than the creekbed, the rest of the site is relatively flat and surface runoff generally flows toward the creek then offsite to the south into Lake Hemet. The Project proposes the construction and operation of an eco-conscious private guest ranch with guest cabins and guest tents, wellness cabins, wellness basecamp, activity hub and lap pool, dining area, health focused commercial kitchen, apiary and fruit trees will contribute to a fully sustainable facility for guests to use and enjoy within the natural setting of the property. Approximately 33 acres of the site (almost 90 percent) will remain as natural open space, including Hurkey Creek.

The *Hydrology Study* also examined potential impacts related to Hurkey Creek. Its watershed area is approximately 7,000 acres and has a peak flow rate of 6,074 cubic feet per second (cfs). The creek was also evaluated relative to the County’s increased runoff criteria and Ordinance No. 458. The *Hydrology Study* concluded that Hurkey Creek is an adequate outlet for Project runoff due to the magnitude of the watershed area and peak flow rate. Therefore, the County runoff criteria were not applied and impacts to the creek are not anticipated from development of the Project.

The proposed Project development will utilize low impact development standards intended to preserve the natural topography of the Project site to the maximum extent possible and a combination of the landscaped areas and a bio infiltration basin are included in the Project design. The proposed Project drainage and water quality systems meet the requirements and criteria established by the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD) and will include flood control protection by providing the necessary Best Management Practices to treat the runoff generated by the Project in a manner that meet the requirements outlined in the Water Quality Management Plan Guidance Document.

The previous **Table 23-2, Project Hydrology Conditions**, shows the post-development conditions for the site as well as the storage of the proposed detention basin per the *Hydrology Study*. As set forth in the *Hydrology Study*, the existing detention basin has adequate capacity to convey the expected 10-year return frequency, 24-hour duration event peak flow from the Project site consistent with the RCFCWCD methodology based on the calculated difference in runoff hydrograph volume between the undeveloped and developed conditions (015-Flood Increased Runoff Criteria). Therefore, the post-Project drainage pattern will remain essentially the same as in the pre-Project condition.

The proposed Project has been reviewed and conditioned by the County Building Department and the County Transportation Department, to mitigate any potential impacts as listed above through site design and the preparation of a WQMP and adherence to the requirements of the NPDES. These are standard conditions for the County of Riverside and are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

The Project will not substantially alter the existing north to south drainage pattern of the site or area, including Hurkey Creek, by the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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d) *Would the Project result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Refer also to Thresholds 18.a and 19.a pertaining to the potential for erosion to occur with Project implementation. The Project will introduce impervious surfaces onto 3.5 acres (10%) in the eastern portion of the site while the remaining 90% of the site will remain in its natural condition. Onsite soils are relatively sandy and granitic in nature and lack thickness due to shallow underlying bedrock (also granitic in nature). These soils are subject to moderate erosion from water and wind, depending on the velocity of the eroding force (i.e., how much water is flowing and how fast it is flowing or how fast the wind is blowing). The onsite soil data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service is supported by the onsite subsurface exploration that was conducted as part of the *Geo Investigation* in 2022.

Existing and proposed drainage conditions are summarized under Threshold 23.c. Furthermore, as stated in Threshold 23.c, the post-Project drainage pattern will remain essentially the same as in the pre-Project condition, including no modifications to Hurkey Creek. Implementation of the Project as proposed would not result in substantial erosion on-site or off-site. Runoff will be directed to onsite landscaping features and other pervious areas and eventually reach an onsite infiltration basin, as shown on the Project Site Plan.

Since the Project involves more than one acre of ground disturbance, it is subject to NPDES permit requirements for the preparation and implementation of a Project-specific SWPPP. Adherence to NPDES permit requirements and the measures established in the SWPPP are routine actions conditioned by the County and will ensure applicable water quality standards are appropriately maintained during construction of the proposed Project.

The proposed Project has been reviewed and conditioned by the County Building Department and the County Transportation Department, to mitigate any potential impacts as listed above through site design and the preparation of a WQMP and adherence to the requirements of the NPDES. These are standards conditions for the County of Riverside and are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes.

Therefore, the Project will result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

e) *Would the Project substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

A detailed description of the post-Project drainage conditions is presented in Thresholds 23.a and 23.b. Onsite improvements include guest cabins and tents, administration and other support and activity buildings, pervious parking areas, landscaping, and Class II base roadway for fire access. The development will preserve the existing onsite drainage pattern by ultimately draining stormwater runoff toward Hurkey Creek.

According to the Project *WQMP*, the site is divided into four drainage management areas (DMA 1-4). Runoff from DMAs 1, 2 and 4 will be treated by Water Quality Basin 1 while DMA 3 is actually

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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self-retaining and will not need an improved facility. The 36.1-acre site currently has 100% pervious surfaces (0% impervious) and the Project proposes to create 3.5 acres of impervious surfaces in the eastern portion of the site as part of the guest ranch facilities. Therefore, development of the Project will increase the impervious surfaces on the site to 10% (3.5 acres divided by 36.1 acres).

The Project will increase runoff from the site by introducing impervious surfaces so the *WQMP* demonstrates that one detention basin (labeled Basin 1 in the *WQMP*) can control this increased runoff. Since the Basin's capacity will be slightly greater than the design capture volume, there will be no increase in offsite runoff from the site as a result of Project development.

Finally, the *Hydrology Study* concludes the existing detention basin is designed to accommodate the 10-year return frequency, 24-hour duration event peak flow from the Project site consistent with the RCFCWCD methodology based on the calculated difference in runoff hydrograph volume between the undeveloped and developed conditions (015-Flood Increased Runoff Criteria).

The hydraulics of Hurkey Creek have been modeled using the Hydrologic Engineering Center - River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) used by the developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This software identified a 100-year flood zone limit within the bed and banks of Hurkey Creek, but no improvements of the Project will be located within that zone. The proposed Project development will utilize low impact development standards intended to preserve the natural topography of the Project site to the maximum extent possible and a combination of the landscaped areas and infiltration trenches are included in the Project design. Approximately 90% of the site will remain as undisturbed open space.

The *Hydrology Study* and *WQMP* demonstrate that the overall drainage patterns are preserved in the proposed condition by matching existing condition discharge points, dispersing impervious area flows to permeable areas, and includes infiltration areas to mitigate increases in peak storm runoff quantities.

These elements mitigate the proposed increases in the imperviousness over the existing conditions while allowing for the installation of all the proposed impervious elements. Using this type of treatment control plan, the Project design has minimized the proposed impervious area footprint as much as feasible without sacrificing design and use elements.

Therefore, the Project will not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site. Any impacts from implementation of the Project will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- f) *Would the Project 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? **Less Than Significant Impact***

A detailed description of the post-Project drainage condition is included in Thresholds 23.a and 23.b. **Figure 23-2, *WQMP Site Plan***, provided in Threshold 23.b, identifies the proposed on-site drainage basins for the Project site.

The Project *WQMP* details four (4) DMAs in conjunction with the proposed Project development. The Project proposes a drive aisle with an asphalt dike along the interior edge to collect runoff from the Project site. Additionally, local storm drain facilities are proposed to collect and route runoff

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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within the Project site as shown in the *Hydrology Study*. The drainage facilities have been proposed in order to protect the Project from flooding and meet the requirements of County Ordinance No. 458. The areas upstream and downstream of the site are rural and mountainous and present little potential for polluted runoff to adversely affect the Project site or properties immediately downstream, including Lake Hemet. According to the Project *Hydrology Study*, the existing site does not retain any stormwater in the existing condition. In the developed condition, the runoff will be detained in a basin designed to accommodate the 10-year return frequency, 24-hour duration event peak flow from the Project site consistent with the RCFCWCD methodology based on the calculated difference in runoff hydrograph volume between the undeveloped and developed conditions (015-Flood Increased Runoff Criteria). Therefore, the post-Project drainage pattern will remain essentially the same as in the pre-Project condition, and Project implementation would not result in an increase in the volume or rate of runoff from the Project site over its undeveloped condition.

The proposed Project has been reviewed and conditioned by the County Building Department and County Transportation Department, to mitigate any potential impacts as listed above through site design and the preparation of a WQMP and adherence to the requirements of the NPDES. The incorporation of BMP's during construction and operation would ensure that the Project does not result in substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.

These are standard conditions for the County of Riverside and are not considered mitigation for CEQA implementation purposes. With the inclusion of these standard conditions, any impacts from implementation of the proposed Project that would create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

g) *Would the Project impede or redirect flood flows?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

Based on a review of the FEMA Flood Rate Insurance Map (FIRM), Panel No. 06065C2170G, the Project site and surrounding areas are all located in FEMA Flood Zone "D" which are areas of undetermined flood hazard". It should also be noted the hydraulics of Hurkey Creek have been modeled using the Hydrologic Engineering Center - River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) used by the developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This software identified a 100-year flood zone limit within the bed and banks of Hurkey Creek, but no improvements of the Project will be located within that zone. The post-Project drainage plan has been designed such that the Project would not impede or redirect flows coming offsite from the north or along Hurkey Creek per the Project *Hydrology Study* and *Grading Plan*. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

h) *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk the release of pollutants due to Project inundation?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

As outlined in Threshold 23.g, the FEMA Flood Rate Insurance Map (FIRM), Panel No. 06065C2170G indicates the Project site and surrounding properties are located in Zone D, which corresponds to areas of undetermined flood hazard". The Project grading plan shows that the northeast portion of the site planned for Project development is outside of the 100-year flood plain established for Hurkey Creek to comply with FEMA flood zone requirements.



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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This information is consistent with County General Plan Safety Element Figure 4 (Flood Hazard Zone) and Figure 10 (Flood Hazard Zone) of the County’s Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP) which shows the Project site is not within the Special Flood Hazard Area or Dam Inundation Area (County General Plan Safety Element Figure 5 Dam Hazard Inundation). The Project site is located approximately 1.9 miles northeast and 30 feet higher in elevation (i.e., upstream) than the Lake Hemet spillway which is at the southwest corner of the lake.

It is noted that Map My County states that the Project site is outside of the flood plain but that a “flood plain review may be required.”

The Project site is located over 40 miles northeast of the nearest coastline (Pacific Ocean); therefore, the risk associated with tsunamis is negligible.

The Project site is located adjacent to a body of water (i.e., Lake Hemet) but at a higher elevation, so a seiche, which is a run-up of water within a lake or embayment triggered by fault or landslide induced ground displacement, would not impact the Project site. Therefore, the risk associated with a seiche is negligible.

In summary, the Project site development area is not located within a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone or risk the release of pollutants due to Project inundation. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*i) Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project *WQMP* has been prepared specifically to comply with the requirements of Riverside County Ordinance No. 754 (Riverside County Water Quality Ordinance) which includes the requirement for the preparation and implementation of a project-specific *WQMP*.

As discussed in Threshold 23.a, the Project site is located in the Santa Ana Region Watershed and the San Jacinto Valley and Hemet Lake Hydrological Sub-Areas with a size of approximately 36.1 acres. With adherence to, and implementation of the conclusions and recommendations set forth in the Project *WQMP*, Project site development will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>LAND USE/PLANNING</b> Would the Project:				
<b>24. Land Use</b>				
a) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A)*; Riverside County General Plan - REMAP; **Figure 4, Conceptual Site Plan**, provided in Section I of this Initial Study; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project site is located in the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP), one of nineteen (19) planning areas within the County of Riverside’s General Plan. As set forth in *Map My County*, the REMAP, and **Figure 4, Conceptual Site Plan**, the Project site’s underlying General Plan land use designation is Open Space – Rural (OS-RUR) but is proposed to be modified to Open Space-Recreation (OS-R). The Project site is currently zoned Light Agricultural – 20-acre minimum lot size (A-1-20) but is proposed to be modified to Natural Assets (N-A). Surrounding zoning to the north, south, and west are N-A, and A-1-10 to the east. Surrounding zoning and land use to the east are Rural Residential and Open Space Rural, respectively. Surrounding land use designations to the north and west is Conservation Habitat, Open Space Rural to the east, and Open Space – Recreation to the southeast and northeast. The zoning and land use designations of the site and surrounding area are delineated in **Table 24-1, Land Use and Zoning Designations**. The site plan of the proposed facilities is consistent with the proposed onsite General Plan land use designations and zoning. In addition, the proposed uses are also consistent and compatible with surrounding zoning and land use designations.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Table 24-1  
Land Use and Zoning Designations**

Location/ Direction	General Plan Land Use Designation	County Zoning
Project Site	Open Space Rural (OS-RUR) <i>existing</i> Open Space – Recreation (OS-R) <i>proposed</i>	Light Agricultural, 20 acre minimum lot size (A-1-20) <i>existing</i> Natural Assets (N-A) <i>proposed</i>
North	Open Space - Conservation Habitat (OS-CH) Open Space – Recreation (OS-R)	N-A
South	OS-R and OS-RUR	N-A
East	OS-RUR	A-1-20
West	OS-CH	Natural Assets, 160 acre minimum lot size (N-A-160)

Source: Map My County [https://gis1.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis1.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=MMC_Public)

For the Project, “Guest Ranch” would be the closest permitted uses allowed in the N-A zone. Therefore, the proposed facilities are consistent with the proposed zoning classification and General Plan land use designation for the site. In addition, they are of low intensity and would be compatible with surrounding zoning classifications and General Plan land use designations (e.g., Open Space Recreation, Open Space Rural, and Conservation Habitat). Therefore, the Project’s proposed development plan is consistent with the proposed zoning classification of the Project site and is compatible with the surrounding area’s zoning. The Project site is also not located within a specific plan area.

The Project, as designed, meets the proposed N-A standards of development in terms of heights, setbacks, lot coverage, parking and landscaping.

Based on the above information, the Project will not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*b) Would the Project disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?*

**No Impact**

The Project is consistent with the existing General Plan land use designations, proposed zoning and developed uses. There are no identified low-income or minority communities on or in the vicinity of the Project site, therefore, this issue is not applicable.

The area surrounding the Project site is largely mountainous land at present with campgrounds to the north, northeast, northwest, and south. The site takes access off of a rural road so activities on this site would not divide or disrupt any existing neighborhoods.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Based on this information, the proposed Project would not disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community). There will be no impact and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

<b>MINERAL RESOURCES</b> Would the Project:				
<b>25. Mineral Resources</b>				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or the residents of the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Potentially expose people or property to hazards from proposed, existing, or abandoned quarries or mines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Riverside County General Plan, Multipurpose Open Space Element, Figure OS-6, Mineral Resource Zones; mindat.org website; United States Geological Service (USGS) website; California State Mining and Geology Board (CSMGB) website; California Geological Survey (CGS) website; and Google Maps.*

**Findings of Fact:**

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

**No Impact**

The California State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) has established Mineral Resources Zones (MRZ) using the following classifications:

- MRZ-1: Areas where the available geologic information indicates no significant mineral deposits or a minimal likelihood of significant mineral deposits.
- MRZ-2a: Areas where the available geologic information indicates that there are significant mineral deposits.
- MRZ-2b: Areas where the available geologic information indicates that there is a likelihood of significant mineral deposits.
- MRZ-3a: Areas where the available geologic information indicates that mineral deposits are likely to exist; however, the significance of the deposit is undetermined.
- MRZ-4: Areas where there is not enough information available to determine the presence or absence of mineral deposits.

As shown on *General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element, Figure OS-6, "Mineral Resource Zones,"* the Project site is within a large portion of the County that has not been studied or designated relative to mineral resource zones ("unstudied"). In addition, the Project site and surrounding areas have not been and are not being used for mining. Therefore, the Project is not

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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expected to result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource in an area classified or designated by the State that would be of value to the region or the residents of the State. No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

- 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?*

**No Impact**

As stated in Threshold 25.a, the Project site and surrounding areas have not been studied or designated as mineral resource zones (“unstudied”) and the area is not designated for mineral resource extraction in the County’s General Plan or the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP). In addition, the Project site and surrounding areas have not been used for mining in the past or at present. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not 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. No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

- c) *Potentially expose people or property to hazards from proposed, existing, or abandoned quarries or mines?*

**No Impact**

Based on aerial photography, it was observed that the Project is not located on, or adjacent to, an existing or abandoned quarry or mine. According to the USGS, CSMGB, and CGS websites, there are no mines or mining claims within 10 miles surrounding the Project site.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not expose people or property to hazards from proposed, existing or abandoned quarries or mines. No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**NOISE** Would the Project result in:

**26. Airport Noise**

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

b) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); Riverside County General Plan Figure S-20 “Airport Locations,” County of Riverside Airport Facilities Map; Figure 3, Aerial Photo, provided in Section I of this IS; and Google Maps.*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Findings of Fact:**

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

**No Impact**

The Project site is not located within 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. The closest airport is the Hemet-Ryan Airport which is located 20 miles west-northwest of the Project site (reference **Figure 3, Aerial Photo**, provided in Section I of this IS). Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. There will be no impacts and no mitigation is required.

- b) *For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?*

**No Impact**

Based on a review of an aerial photo of the Project site and its immediate environs (reference **Figure 3, Aerial Photo**, provided in Section I of this IS), the proposed Project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or heliport. The closest private airstrip is the Lake Riverside Airport which is located approximately 12 miles southwest of the Project site and the closest heliport is at the Hemet Valley Hospital located approximately 17.5 miles northwest of the Project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is required.

**Monitoring:** No monitoring is required.

**27. Noise Effects by the Project**

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan, noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan, Table N-1 (“Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure”); *Ridge Ranch Trip Generation and Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) Screening Evaluation*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 8-21-2021 (*TG/VMT Memo, Appendix I*); and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- a) *Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan, noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

**Noise Characteristics**

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves in a compressible medium such as air. Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound is characterized by various parameters which describe the rate of oscillation of sound waves, the distance between successive troughs or crests, the speed of propagation, and the pressure level or energy content of a given sound wave. In particular, the sound pressure level has become the most common descriptor used to characterize the loudness of an ambient sound level. The unit of sound pressure ratio to the faintest sound detectable by a keen human ear is called a decibel (dB).

Because sound or noise can vary in intensity by over one million times within the range of human hearing, decibels are on a logarithmic loudness scale similar to the Richter Scale used for earthquake magnitude. Since the human ear is not as equally sensitive to all sound frequencies within the entire spectrum, noise levels at maximum human sensitivity are factored more heavily into sound descriptions in a process called “A-weighting” written as “dBA.” Any further reference to decibels written as “dB” should be understood to be A-weighted values.

Time variations in noise exposure are typically expressed in terms of a steady-state energy level equal to the energy content of the time varying period (called Leq), or, alternately, as a statistical description of the sound pressure level that is exceeded over some fraction of a given observation period. Finally, because community receptors are more sensitive to unwanted noise intrusion during the evening and at night, State law requires that, for planning purposes, an artificial dB increment be added to quiet time noise levels in a 24-hour noise descriptor called the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). In some jurisdictions, the day-night level (called “Ldn”) is used for noise exposure planning. Ldn is almost equivalent to CNEL.

CNEL or Ldn-based standards apply to noise sources whose noise generation is preempted from local control (such as from on-road vehicles, trains, airplanes, etc.). Since local jurisdictions cannot regulate the noise generator, they exercise land use planning authority on the receiving property. Uses that are amenable to local control are generally considered “stationary sources.” Local jurisdictions generally regulate the level of noise that one use may impose upon another.

One noise source associated with land use intensification governed by local regulation is noise from construction activities. Per Riverside County Ordinance No. 847, the following noise restrictions apply to the proposed Project:

- Whenever a construction site is within one-quarter (1/4) mile<sup>8</sup> of an occupied residence(s), no construction activities shall be undertaken between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. during the months of June through September and between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. during the months of October through May.

<sup>8</sup> Closest receptor is 732 feet to the northwest, so this condition is met

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Project Noise Setting**

The Project site is located within the San Jacinto Mountains northeast of Lake Hemet within the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP) under the County’s General Plan. Existing land uses surrounding the proposed Project site include vacant rural lands to the east, south, and west, with forest-oriented open space/recreational uses to the north (e.g., Hurkey Creek Campground, Hurkey Creek Park, and Camp Ronald McDonald). The proposed guest ranch is consistent with the REMAP and the proposed Natural Assets (N-A) zoning will be consistent with existing surrounding zoning including N-A and Light Agriculture (A-1 and A-1-20). The Project proposes a General Plan land use designation of Open Space – Recreation which is consistent with other surrounding land use designations including Open Space – Rural (OS-RUR), Open Space - Recreation (OS – REC), and Open Space – Conservation Habitat OS-CH). The site and surrounding area are typical of rural mountain communities with a majority of vacant forestland and scattered low intensity uses. The major sources of noise in the area are traffic along Highway 74 to the west and lesser volumes of traffic along Apple Canyon Road along the northern boundary of the site. There is also occasional noise from outdoor activities at the aforementioned recreational uses, especially during the summer when there are more campers.

The site is currently vacant with no residents or visitors. The Project proposes 36 cabins which are expected to house up to 2 guests per cabin, plus 35 employees per shift, which equals a worst-case estimate of 107 persons on the site at maximum occupancy.

**Riverside County Noise Standards**

For noise sources generated on private property (such as the proposed Project), the appropriate noise standards, as contained in the Riverside County Noise Element indicates the normally acceptable noise level (i.e., Community Noise Equivalent Level or CNEL) for residential properties is less than 60 dBA. Similarly, the County’s Stationary Source Noise Standards for residential uses are 65 dB Lmax from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 pm, and to 45 dB Lmax from 10:00 p.m. to 7 a.m. However, it should be noted these are only preferred standards and the final decisions is made by the Riverside County Planning Department and Office of Public Health based on the County’s General Plan Policy N-2.3 Stationary Source Land Use Noise Standards. In addition, County Ordinance No. 847 establishes a maximum noise standard of 45 dBA (Lmax) at any time for rural land uses such as those surrounding the Project site (i.e., all Open Space designation with Rural, Recreation, and Rural Residential and Rural Mountainous zones).

**Construction Noise Impacts**

Temporary construction noise impacts vary markedly because the noise strength of construction equipment ranges widely as a function of the equipment used and its activity level. Short-term construction noise impacts tend to occur in discrete phases dominated initially by earth-moving sources, then by foundation pouring and roadway grading, and finally for finish construction.

The earth-moving sources are seen to be the noisiest with equipment noise ranging up to about 90 dB (A) at 50 feet from the source. Spherically radiating point sources of noise emissions are atmospherically attenuated by a factor of 6 dB per doubling of distance, or about 20 dB in 500 feet of propagation. The loudest earth-moving noise sources will therefore sometimes be detectable above the local background beyond 1,000 feet from the construction area. An impact radius of 1,000 feet or more assumes a clear line-of-sight and no other machinery or equipment



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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noise that would mask project construction noise. With buildings and other topographical barriers interrupting line-of-sight conditions, the potential “noise envelope” around individual construction sites is reduced. Construction noise impacts are, therefore, somewhat less than that predicted under idealized input conditions.

Based on typical construction activities, the Project is expected to generate noise levels which could range up to 80 dBA at 50 feet from the equipment during grading and concrete pouring which are generally the loudest activities when constructing the types of structured proposed by the Project. It is estimated construction will require 6-8 months to complete and the closest “sensitive receptor” to the Project site is a single-family residence on the north side of Apple Canyon Road approximately 125 north of the northwest corner of the site but 732 feet northwest of the proposed Project development area. Therefore, using the typical thresholds for construction noise derived from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health of an 85 dBA Leq 8 hrs standard, the project would be less than significant for construction noise.

There are no specific performance standards that apply to construction, but these short-term noise impacts are typically minimized by time restrictions placed on grading permits. Per Riverside County Ordinance No. 847, the following noise restrictions apply to the proposed Project:

- Whenever a construction site is within one-quarter (1/4) mile<sup>9</sup> of an occupied residence(s), no construction activities shall be undertaken between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. during the months of June through September and between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. during the months of October through May.

The County may also implement other standard conditions of approval regarding construction noise including equipment mufflers, staging area locations, etc. These are standard conditions and are not considered unique mitigation under CEQA. Implementation of these conditions will help ensure that noise impacts from Project construction will remain at less than significant levels and will help minimize annoyance in the surrounding community. These conditions will apply to all Project-related construction activities. Therefore, construction impacts will be less than significant.

**Operation Noise Impacts**

Implementation of the Project involves operation of new institutional uses (i.e., Guest Ranch) and the main sources of noise would include onsite vehicular traffic noise circulating around the northeast portion of the site where the buildings are located, parking lot activities, HVAC equipment, pool equipment, general outdoor recreational activities. However, the Project is not expected to significantly increase overall ambient noise levels due to its low intensity of planned activities. Due to the physical distance between the Project site and nearest sensitive receptor (a caretaker’s residence approximately 732 linear feet to the northwest of the proposed development area and 1,061 feet from any proposed outdoor activities), the Project is not expected to generate significant operational noise at the adjacent property line compared to County noise standards. The Project *TG/VMT Memo* estimates the Project will generate fewer than 500 daily vehicle trips which is well below the County’s threshold of 100 peak hour trips.

<sup>9</sup> Closest receptor is 732 feet to the northwest, so this condition is met

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Therefore, more detailed level of service (LOS) and VMT analyses are not required (see also Threshold 37.b regarding VMT impacts).

Based on the low amount of expected traffic and low intensity onsite activities proposed (e.g., therapy, yoga, hiking, swimming, nature watching, etc.), the Project is not expected to generate substantial noise that would exceed the County’s normally acceptable noise standards and will not exceed the County’s Noise/Land Use Compatibility normally acceptable CNEL for residential land use. As a result, Project activities are expected to generate less than 3 dBA increase in overall ambient noise levels in the surrounding area. The purpose of the Ridge Guest Ranch is to provide a center to learn to relax, detox, eat healthy, and commune/connect with the natural beauty of the surrounding environment without the sound and distractions of the everyday world. The following is a list of uses/activities to help further describe potential noise factors, or lack thereof. Please also reference **Figure 27-1, Noise and Sensitive Receptors**.

1. The Ridge Guest Ranch proposes 36 units, with a maximum of 2 guests per unit, for a total of 72 guests, and a maximum of 35 staff members per largest shift.
2. Guest units have no televisions or telephones; use of cell phones allowed only in guest rooms.
3. No electronic devices are allowed to be used during wellness sessions.
4. No outdoor public address system proposed.
5. No outdoor amplified music proposed.
6. Guests will need to make a reservation to participate in all wellness activities, to ensure an appropriate number of participants.
7. All yoga meditation classes will be provided in a quiet area in wellness base camp or under the Owl Tree to offer time to rest, detox, and cleanse. No electronic devices allowed during sessions. (Reference **Figure 27-1**).
8. Indoor/enclosed sound bath offers the guests a deeply immersive, full body listening experience, powerful therapeutic and restorative meditative process using sound bowls. (Reference **Figure 27-1**).
9. There are two outdoor gathering areas, the lap pool for lap swimming only and pool area has 30 lounge chairs for resting after sessions and swimming, and the activity hub, with 40 seats for guests. (Reference **Figure 27-1**).
10. Only one outdoor propane firepit is proposed at the pool with seats for 6-8 guests. No wood burning campfires are allowed on site as this is very high-fire area. (Reference **Figure 27-1**).
11. Onsite activities may include archery, cornhole games, and horseshoes. (Reference **Figure 27-1**).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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12. Outdoor activities, such as meditation, are geared to reconnect to nature through silence; no electronics allowed. Main meditation area is located under the Owl Tree in agricultural area of the land.
13. Indoor activities include daily sessions with a special instructor or spiritual leader to discuss various topics, 2-3 hours in the morning and afternoon, held in the wellness basecamp center. Topics range from talks on wellness, detoxing, stress, surrounding nature and history, gardening, recipes and herbs.
14. Offsite outdoor activities may include hiking, kayaking, bike riding, and horseback riding.
15. Any future special events will be separately requested and entitled via a substantial conformance.
16. Any future outdoor special event sound/music will be separately requested and entitled.

The Federal Highway Administration Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Policy and Guidance indicates that a change in noise level of 3 dBA is considered barely perceptible while a change in noise level of 5 dBA is considered readily perceptible to the human ear. Therefore, an increase of 3 dBA or more above ambient conditions is generally considered to be the threshold of significance for causing a substantial permanent increase in noise in the Project's rural mountain setting.

In addition, the Federal Interagency Committee on Noise (FICON) model indicates the following:

- (1) ambient CNEL under 60 dBA requires a 5 dBA or higher increase for a significant effect;
- (2) ambient CNEL 60-65 dBA = 3 dBA or higher increase for a significant effect; and
- (3) ambient CNEL over 65 dBA = 1.5 dBA or higher increase for a significant effect.

The ambient baseline noise level in the Project area is well under 60 dBA due to its rural/open space and passive recreational uses. The nature of the Project as a wellness retreat and its intended activities will not increase noise levels by 5 dBA or more for surrounding land uses, including the closest sensitive receptor. Therefore, potential noise impacts of the Project are considered to be less than significant.

Finally, the County has a standard condition for new development requiring that all operational noise activities adhere to the County of Riverside Ordinance No. 847 sound level standards and shall not exceed at the nearest adjacent property line during all times (including long-term operations). This is considered regulatory compliance and not project specific mitigation under CEQA.

With regulatory compliance (i.e., County Conditions of Approval and Ordinances) Project operation will not cause a significant change in existing ambient noise levels in the surrounding rural mountain community. Therefore, this operational impact is considered to be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

In summary, with implementation of standard conditions, short-term and long-term noise impacts of the Project will less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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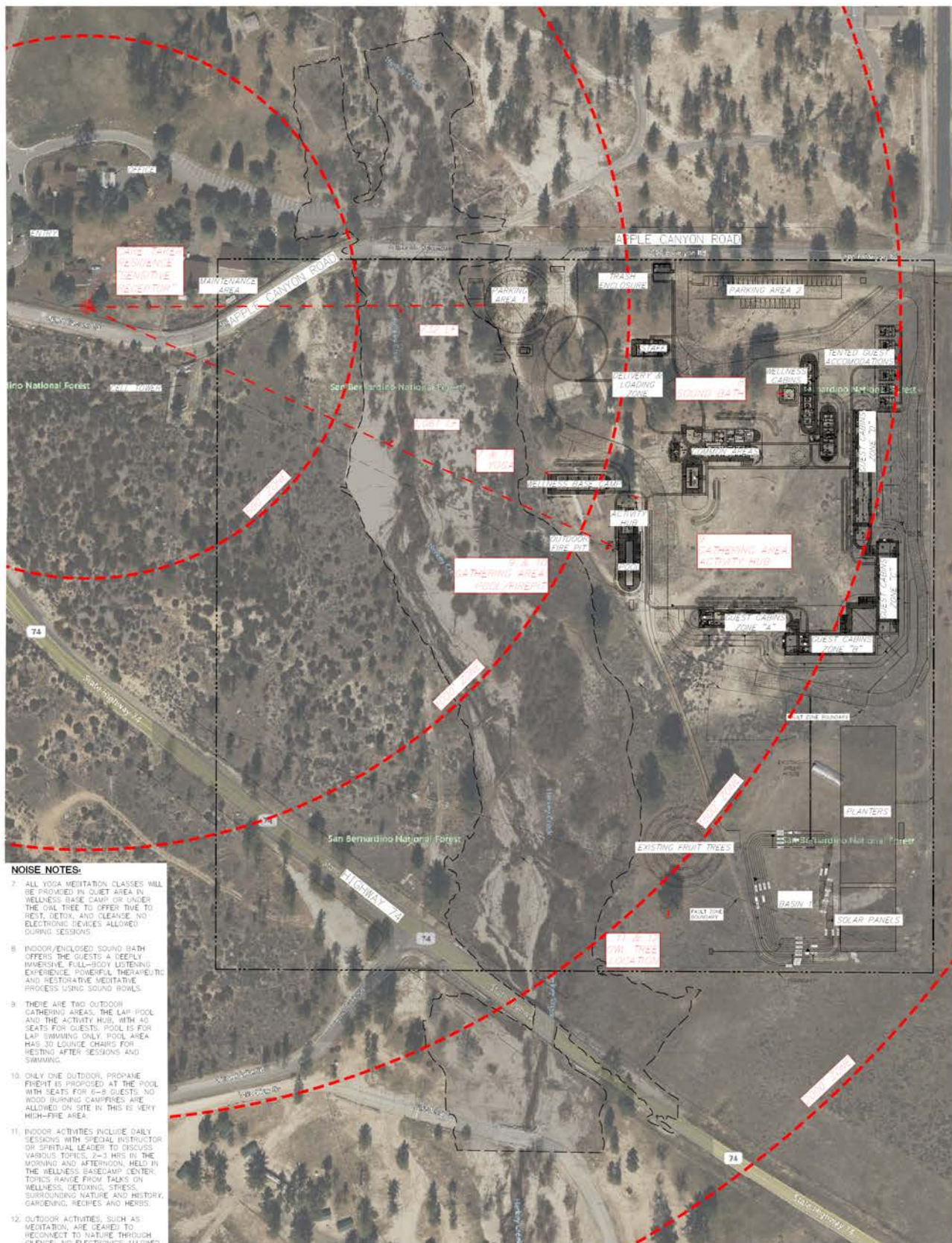
b) *Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

An assessment of potential vibration impacts from the Project can be conducted using referenced vibration levels and methodology set forth in the Caltrans Transportation and Construction Induced Vibration Guidance Manual. To determine the vibratory impacts during construction, reference construction equipment vibration levels were utilized and then extrapolated to the façade of the nearest adjacent structure. For the proposed Project, the closest sensitive receptor is a rural residence located approximately 125 feet north of the western boundary of the site. It should be noted, however, that the residence is located approximately 732 feet from any planned area of disturbance on the site (i.e., northeast portion east of the creek); reference **Figure 27-1**. For purposes of assessing structural impacts from vibration, the nearest sensitive receptor is considered a “new residential structure” and no potential historical (more than 50 years in age) or fragile building is known to be located within the vicinity of the site.

Due to the low intensity activities and low scale buildings (i.e., one-story buildings and cabins), construction will not require the use of substantial vibration-inducing equipment or activities such as pile drivers or blasting. The main sources of vibration impacts during construction of the Project would be from bulldozer activity during site preparation and grading, loading trucks during excavation, and vibratory rollers during placement of roller-compacted decomposed granite driveways. **Table 27-1, Typical Construction Vibration Impacts**, shows the Project’s construction-related vibration analysis at the residential structures to the west.

**FIGURE 27-1  
Noise and Sensitive Receptors**



**NOISE NOTES:**

- 7. ALL YOGA MEDITATION CLASSES WILL BE PROVIDED IN QUIET AREA IN WELLNESS BASE CAMP OR UNDER THE OIL TREE TO OFFER TIME TO REST, DETOX, AND CLEANSE. NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES ALLOWED DURING SESSIONS.
- 8. INDOOR/ENCLOSED SOUND BATH OFFERS THE GUESTS A DEEPLY IMMERSIVE, FULL-BODY LISTENING EXPERIENCE. POWERFUL THERAPEUTIC AND RESTORATIVE MEDITATIVE PROCESS USING SOUND BOWLS.
- 9. THERE ARE TWO OUTDOOR GATHERING AREAS, THE LAP POOL AND THE ACTIVITY HUB, WITH 40 SEATS FOR GUESTS. POOL IS FOR LAP SWIMMING ONLY. POOL AREA HAS 30 LOUNGE CHAIRS FOR RESTING AFTER SESSIONS AND SWIMMING.
- 10. ONLY ONE OUTDOOR, PROPANE FIREPIT IS PROPOSED AT THE POOL WITH SEATS FOR 6-8 GUESTS. NO WOOD BURNING CAMPFIRES ARE ALLOWED ON SITE IN THIS IS VERY HIGH-FIRE AREA.
- 11. INDOOR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE DAILY SESSIONS WITH SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR OR SPIRITUAL LEADER TO DISCUSS VARIOUS TOPICS, 2-3 HRS IN THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON. HELD IN THE WELLNESS BASECAMP CENTER. TOPICS RANGE FROM TALKS ON WELLNESS, DETOXING, STRESS, SURROUNDING NATURE AND HISTORY, GARDENING, RECIPES AND HERBS.
- 12. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS MEDITATION, ARE DEARED TO RECONNECT TO NATURE THROUGH SILENCE. NO ELECTRONICS ALLOWED. YOGA MEDITATION AREA IS LOCATED UNDER THE OIL TREE IN AN AREA OF THE LAND.

NUMBERS 7 THROUGH 12 UTILIZED IN THIS FIGURE CORRESPOND TO THE LIST OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES OUTLINED IN THE INITIAL STUDY





Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Table 27-1  
Typical Construction Vibration Impacts**

Construction Activity	Distance to Closest Structure*	Duration	Calculated Vibration Level - PPV (in/sec)	Damage Potential Level	Annoyance Criteria Level
Vibratory Roller	732 feet	Continuous/ Frequent	0.004	No Impact	Barely Perceptible
Large Bulldozer	732 feet	Continuous/ Frequent	0.002	No Impact	Barely Perceptible
Loaded Trucks	732 feet	Continuous/ Frequent	0.001	No Impact	Barely Perceptible

Source: Caltrans Transportation and Construction Induced Vibration Guidance Manual, April 2020

\* Distance provided in **Figure 27-1**

The estimated vibration noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors are compared to the Caltrans Vibration Manual thresholds. The “worst case” vibratory impact from the site is estimated to be 0.004 PPV (in/sec) at the residential structure to the northwest. These estimated noise levels indicate that the annoyance potential of vibration from construction activities would be “barely perceptible”, and no potential damage is expected to residential structures and modern commercial/industrial buildings in the nearby vicinity.

Therefore, potential vibration impacts from construction or operation of the Project will be less than significant with standard conditions of approval. These conditions will apply to all Project-related construction activities. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is required.

**Monitoring:** No monitoring is required.

**PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES:**

**28. Paleontological Resources**

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

**Source(s):** *General Plan, Figure OS-8, Paleontological Sensitivity; Map My County (Appendix A); and County Geologist.*

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, or site, or unique geologic feature?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project site is mapped in the *General Plan* and *Map My County* as having a “Low Potential” for paleontological resources (fossils). This category encompasses lands for which previous field surveys and documentation demonstrate a low potential for containing significant

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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paleontological resources subject to adverse impacts. As such, this Project is not anticipated to require any direct mitigation for paleontological resources.

However, the proposed Project site grading/earthmoving activities could potentially impact potential resources. Therefore, a condition of approval has been applied to the Project to provide a paleontological resource impact mitigation program (PRIMP) outlining what steps are to be taken should fossil remains be encountered during site development.

This is a standard condition and pursuant to CEQA, is not considered mitigation. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will result in less than significant impacts that would directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, or site, or unique geologic features.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**POPULATION AND HOUSING** Would the Project:

**29. Housing**

a) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a demand for additional housing, particularly housing affordable to households earning 80% or less of the County's median income?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A)*; Project Plans (**Appendix K**); and Riverside County General Plan Housing Element.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

**No Impact**

The Project proposes to develop the existing property to accommodate a guest ranch with 36 guest cabins and supporting buildings and related infrastructure. The Project site is vacant so no housing or people will be displaced. The Project does not propose any permanent housing so there will be no long-term impacts to the local housing stock or population. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. There would be no impact.

- b) *Would the Project create a demand for additional housing, particularly housing affordable to households earning 80% or less of the County's median income?*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**No Impact**

As stated in Threshold 29.a, the Project proposes to develop the currently vacant property as a guest ranch. As such, it will not introduce the demand for additional permanent residential housing.

Implementation of the proposed Project would not create a demand for additional housing, particularly housing affordable to households earning 80% or less of the County’s median income. There would be no impact.

- c) *Would the Project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As stated in Threshold 29.a, the Project proposes to develop the property as a guest ranch. The Project only plans onsite improvements including an interior loop road with a driveway connection off of Apple Canyon Road to the north, an existing mountain road, which connects to Highway 74 just to the west. The Proposed use is consistent with the Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan and the proposed Natural Assets (N-A) zoning will be consistent with existing surrounding zoning including N-A and Light Agriculture (A-1 and A-1-20). The Project proposes a General Plan land use designation of Open Space – Recreation which is consistent with other surrounding land use designations including Open Space – Rural (OS-RUR), Open Space - Recreation (OS – REC), and Open Space – Conservation Habitat OS-CH). The Project will have guests and employees and will not induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

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

**30. Fire Services**

**Source(s):** Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) website; *The Ridge Guest Ranch Fire Protection Plan, APN 568-070-021*, prepared by Firewise 2000, LLC, 6-12-2023 (**FPP, Appendix H**); Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program); and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

*Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered*



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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*governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire services?*

**Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project site is in a rural area served by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE). The site is within the fire service area referred to as “Battalion 11” and the closest station to the site is Station 53 (Garner Valley) located at 59200 Morris Ranch Road in the unincorporated community of Garner Valley. This station is located 7 miles (driving distance) south of the Project site and the approximate response time is 5.5 minutes assuming normal driving conditions. It should also be noted that the United States Forestry Services operates the Keenwild Station approximately 4.7 miles to the north of the site, which may also service this Project in case of emergency.

The Project involves construction and operation of a guest ranch. These facilities would add visitors and staff to the site which would incrementally increase the need for fire protection services especially during wind-driven wildfire events. Due to its isolated location and the number of persons who may be present, it is reasonable to recommend these facilities have direct communication with County fire staff in case emergency evacuation is necessary.

The Project will introduce additional persons into the area which has high fire risks. Therefore, a *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* was prepared to evaluate the proposed guest ranch to ensure it will not expose people or structures to significant fire risks or hazards. The *FPP* takes into account the property’s location, topography, geology, combustible vegetation (fuel types), climatic conditions and fire history. It also considers water supply, access, structure ignitability and fire resistive building materials, fire protection systems and equipment, impacts to existing emergency services, defensible space, and vegetation management.

The *FPP* proposes fuel modification requirements to effectively reduce the potential exposure of people and structures onsite from a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires. In this way it would help reduce a potential increase in the need for fire protection services by the RCFD.

The *FPP* recommends implementation and maintenance of the following four (4) Fuel Treatment Zones as described in the 2019 California Fire Code, each with their own characteristics, required landscaping, and required maintenance:

- **Fuel Treatment Zone 1**, the Immediate Zone, is the area from the exterior wall surface of the building extending 5-feet on a horizontal plane. The intent of Zone 1 is to create a landscape absent of all combustible materials. This zone includes the level graded area under and around all decks and requires the most stringent wildland fire fuel reduction and maintenance. This area shall be kept clear of combustibles, plant-based landscaping mulch, and all large shrubs and trees. It may have a few nonwoody plants, generally confined to pots or containers, that are low growing. Plants that grow in water are also a good choice. No plants shall be grown beneath windows or adjacent to doorways. The soil surface may be bare ground or covered with hardscape features such as pavers, gravel, concrete, rock, or other non-combustible material. Water features and statuary developed from non-combustible materials are also a good choice for this zone.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- Fuel Treatment Zone 2** – Owner Maintained Intermediate Zone, is commonly called the defensible space zone for fire suppression forces and protects structures from radiant and convective heat. Zone 2 consists of the area from 5'-50' from the exterior wall surface extending out in a horizontal plane. Within the zone, flammable native vegetation shall be removed and replanted with drought tolerant, fire resistive, irrigated, plantings as approved by the Riverside County FD. (see Appendix A). Firewood shall not be stacked under tree canopy and stored at least 10 feet from property lines. Zone 2 fuel treatments are measured from the exterior walls of the structure or from the most distal point of a combustible projection, an attached accessory structure, or an accessory structure within 10 feet of a habitable structure. It provides the best protection against the high radiant heat produced by a wildfire and a generally cleared area in which fire suppression forces can operate during wildfire events.
- Fuel Treatment Zone 3A** - the Extended Zone, is the area beyond Zone 2, from 50'-100' in a horizontal plane. All highly combustible native vegetation is excluded within the zone. Zone 3A may be partially, or non-irrigated, depending upon the plant species selected for planting. Irrigation shall not be required for natural slopes when there is a danger of slope failure. The goal within Zone 3A is the reduction or selective clearing of existing native vegetation and dense chaparral by 50% and the planting and maintenance of only approved species.
- Fuel Treatment Zone 3B** – Bio-retention Basin - Owner Maintained, is located on the southeastern corner of the property, west of the planned solar farm and planter areas. This area, as part of the Water Quality Management Plan, has been designed to reduce storm water and soil runoff from the site. The basin will be planted with native plants materials and maintained to the required maintenance and landscaping standards listed for Zone 3A. Within Zone 3B will be thinning zones beginning at the edge of Zone 2 and including all natural and manufactured slopes. The specified intent is to achieve and maintain an overall 50% reduction in the canopy and removal of 100% of the dead and dying plant material following the growth cycle of the vegetation. Removal of prohibited and invasive species is permitted. The Project owner(s) is responsible for the maintenance of the area to Zone 3B standards as needed.

The *FPP* also includes supplemental fuel treatment zones for the onsite roadways, setback areas from the adjacent U.S. Forest Service land, Hurkey Creek setback zone, permanent markers for each zone, and a Shelter-In-Place (SIP) location and plan for how onsite sheltering will be implemented if needed. The *FPP* lists construction practices and materials to minimize fire risk, specifications for the onsite water systems (domestic and fire) including two onsite wells (one of them new with this Project), and three water storage tanks. The various recommendations of the *FPP* are shown in **Figure 30-1, Fuel Modification Plan Map**.

With implementation of the *FPP*, the Project will not result in a significant risk to persons or property on the Project site from wildfire or a significant increase in the need for fire protection services from the RCFD. **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1** is recommended to assure the site design requirements of the *FPP* are implemented during Project construction and operation.

As part of the Project approval(s), standard conditions are assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to fire services. Funding for the RCFD is obtained from various sources, including the County's general fund, city general and benefit assessment funds, and other sources. RCFD capital funding is mostly provided by Development Impact Fees (DIF) collected by Riverside County or by the cities in which the specific project is located, pursuant to Ordinance No. 659. DIF for fire protection shall be paid prior to the issuance of a certificate of

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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occupancy. Payment of DIF is a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

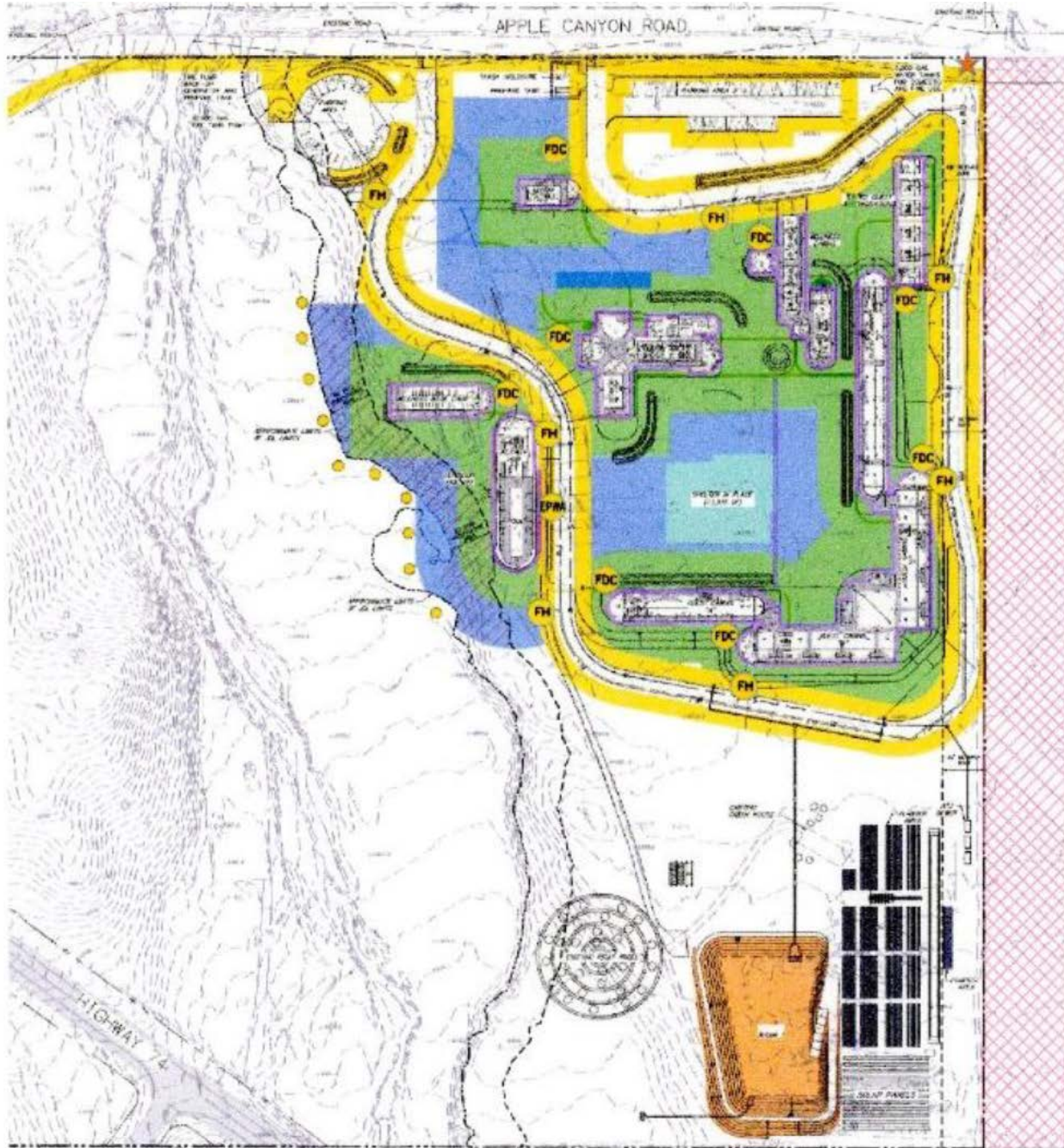
With implementation of standard conditions of approval, fire protection regulatory compliance, and **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**, the Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire services. Any impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation.

**Mitigation:**

**MM-FIRE-1 Fire Protection Plan.** Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall demonstrate the facility has implemented all recommendations of the *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* prepared for the Project by Firewise 2000, LLC dated 6-12-2023 or subsequent County-approved version. The *FPP* includes but is not limited to the creation of four onsite Fuel Treatment Zones for fuel management, a shelter in place plan for guests and employees if necessary, during a wildfire event, non-treatment areas, construction material restrictions, and water system requirements. The *FPP* shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Fire Marshal.

**Monitoring:** To be monitored through the Certificate of Occupancy Permit Process and site inspections by Riverside County Building and Safety Department and the County Fire Marshal shall be included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project to assure its implementation.

**FIGURE 30-1  
Fuel Modification Plan Map**



FUEL MODIFICATION PLAN MAP LEGEND MOUNTAIN CENTER, RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA	
SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
	<b>Zone 1 Immediate Zone (Owner Maintained)</b> - The extending from 0'-5' from the exterior wall surface of the building on a horizontal plane. Hardscape or limited fire - resistant plantings are acceptable. No mulch or combustible material (including stacked firewood) is permitted.
	<b>Zone 2 - Intermediate Zone (Owner Maintained)</b> - The area from 5' extending out to 50' from the immediate edge of Zone 1. This area may be planted with low growth, drought tolerant and fire resistant plant species. Plant height along Zone 1 shall begin at no more than 6" and increasing to a maximum height of 18" at Zone 3. Trees shall not exceed 30' in height or as approved by the FAHJ.
	<b>Zone 3A - Extended Zone (Owner Maintained)</b> the area from the immediate edge of Zone 2 out on a horizontal plane for 50' this area would be considered for selective clearing of natural vegetation and dense chaparral by removing 50% of the square footage of the area. Trees and brush shall be limbed up off the ground, the lowest branches of mature trees shall be limbed 5' off the ground and 10' above any roof structure.
	<b>Zone 3B - Bio-Retention Basins (Owner Maintained)</b> A thinning zone beginning out the edge of Zone 1 or 2 and includes all natural and manufactured slopes. The intent is to achieve and maintain an overall 50% reduction in the canopy and 100% removal of dead and dying plant material and the removal of all prohibited and invasive species.
	<b>Roadside Fuel Treatment Zone Owner Maintained</b> - Vegetation shall be modified along all access roads twenty feet on each side of the road. Vertical clearance of 13'6" must be maintained for all trees and limbs.
	<b>Offsite US Forest Service - (Maintained by Owner of the Ridge)</b> - A 100-foot fuel treatment zone on USFS property financed by the owner of the Ridge facility. The maintenance may be completed by the USFS or by an approved private contractor. The goal is the removal of 50% of the flammable material including dead and dying material.
	<b>Hurkey Creek Setback- A 50-foot setback from the Hurkey Creek Jurisdictional Boundary</b> where no fuel fuel treatments area allowed or proposed. An existing well will be maintained but no new construction will be allowed within the Hurkey Creek setback.
	<b>Hurkey Creek Setback- A 50-foot setback zone with limited low impact removal</b> of dead and dying material, trash and exotic material removed.
	<b>Shelter-in-Place Location</b> - A pre-designated location within the ridge facility used only for sheltering guest and employees when notified by the RCFD or other qualified official. SIP would be in the case that the escape routes from the facility were compromised by an approaching wildfire.
	<b>Zone Markers</b> -
	<b>Fire Department Connection (Tentative)</b>
	<b>Emergency/Fire Access Way Entrance</b>
	The FH (Fire Hydrant) symbol is shown for reference only. Each fire hydrant is to be installed per the Riverside County Fire Department.
	<b>Emergency Pool Water Access</b>



	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>31. Sheriff Services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RCSD) website; Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program); and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

*Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for sheriff services?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The proposed Project would have law enforcement services available from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RCSD). The closest County Sheriff's station to the Project site is the Lake Hemet station located at 56570 Highway 74 near the Lake Hemet Campground. This station is 1 mile (driving distance) south of the Project site and the approximate response time is 2 minutes assuming an average driving speed of 35 miles per hour.

As part of the Project approval(s), standard conditions are assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to sheriff services. The Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate fees set forth in the Ordinance. Furthermore, the Project must comply with County Ordinance No. 659 to prevent any potential effects to sheriff services from rising to a level of significance. County Ordinance No. 659 establishes the utilities and public services mitigation fee applicable to all projects to reduce incremental impacts to the sheriff services. Payment of DIF is a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

Impacts from implementation of the proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for sheriff services. Any potential impacts to Sheriff services are considered incremental for the Project, are less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

<b>32. Schools</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Source(s):** Hemet Unified School District website; and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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*Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for schools?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project area is served by the Hemet Unified School District (HUSD). The schools that serve the Project area are as follows:

- Hamilton Elementary School (grades K-8) located at 57550 Mitchell Road in the unincorporated community of Anza approximately 8.2 miles (driving distance) northwest of the site;
- Hamilton High School (grades 9-12) located at 57430 Mitchell Road in the unincorporated community of Anza approximately 9.1 miles (driving distance) northwest of the site.

The Project proposes uses on the site that will not generate students who would require facilities or services of the HUSD.

The Project will be required to pay school fees to the Hemet Unified School District based on occupied or habitable square footage at the time of building permit issuance in order to mitigate or offset any incremental impacts to school facilities. Payment of school fees is a standard condition and is not considered unique mitigation under CEQA. The proposed Project will not generate new students that would require school facilities or services, so any impacts will be less than significant with the payment of the applicable impact fee.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**33. Libraries**

**Source(s):** Riverside County Library System website; Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program); Riverside County Library System website; and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

*Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for libraries?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The County of Riverside operates a system of thirty-five (35) libraries and two (2) bookmobiles to serve unincorporated populations. The library system manages a library catalog consisting of 1.3

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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million items in the library system and the annual checkout of over 3.5 million books, audios and videos. The closest libraries to the Project site are the Idyllwild Public Library located at 54401 Village Center Drive in the unincorporated town of Idyllwild approximately 8.2 miles (driving distance) to the north.

Library impacts are typically attributed to residential development as reflected in Ordinance No. 659. The Project proposes institutional type uses which will not generate the need for additional library facilities or services.

Implementation of the proposed Project will not result in the expansion of the existing library system or require any new construction of library facilities. The Project site's proposed "commercial" type development may result in an incremental, but less than significant, increase in the demand of library services.

The Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate fees set forth in the Ordinance. Adherence to Ordinance No. 659 is typically a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

With payment of the DIF, any impacts from implementation of the proposed Project that would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for library services, are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**34. Health Services**

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan General Plan EIR No. 441; and Google Maps.

**Findings of Fact:**

*Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for health services?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The closest comprehensive health service facility to the Project site is the Hemet Valley Medical Center (also known as the Hemet Global Medical Center) located at 1117 E. Devonshire Avenue in Hemet approximately 22 miles (driving distance) to the northwest. The approximate driving time from the site to this facility would be 35 minutes, assuming normal driving conditions. The Project is largely recreational in nature and will increase the occupancy of the site in terms of

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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guests and employees, but it is not expected to result in any significant permanent increase in the need for health services, the need to alter any existing health service facilities, or result in the need to construct new facilities for any phases of the Project. Therefore, any impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**RECREATION** Would the Project:

**35. Parks and Recreation**

a) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located within a Community Service Area (CSA) or recreation and park district with a Community Parks and Recreation Plan (Quimby fees)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A)*; Ord. No. 460, Section 10.35 (Regulating the Division of Land – Park and Recreation Fees and Dedications); Ord. No. 659 (Establishing Development Impact Fees); and Parks & Open Space Department Review.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project includes constructing new onsite recreational facilities to serve the guests of The Ridge Guest Ranch as well as staff. The Project would not require the construction or expansion of public recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

The Project is not expected to have any impact on recreational facilities and all new or expanded onsite recreational facilities will serve the needs of the Project. Any impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

**No Impact**



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The proposed Project is near the intersection of Apple Canyon Road and Highway 74. The site is in a very rural area with few improvements and no parks or improved trails. All new or expanded onsite recreational facilities will serve the needs of Ridge Ranch.

The Project would not generate any need for, or use of existing, neighborhood or regional parks, or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. As discussed in Threshold 35.a, the proposed uses do not create impacts to these facilities. No impacts will occur.

- c) *Be located within a Community Service Area (CSA) or recreation and park district with a Community Parks and Recreation Plan (Quimby fees)?*

**No Impact**

According to *Map My County*, the Project site is not within an established County CSA. The Project’s proposed guest ranch uses would not create impacts to a CSA or recreation and park district with a Community Parks and Recreation Plan (Quimby fees). No impacts will occur, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**36. Recreational Trails**

- a) Include the construction or expansion of a trail system?

**Source(s):** Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan (REMAP) Figure 7, *Trails and Bikeway System*; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Include the construction or expansion of a trail system?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

According to REMAP Figure 7, *Trails and Bikeway System*, there are no Regional Open Space Trails existing or planned on or adjacent to the Project site. The closest planned regional trails to the Project site are on Highway 74 about 1.3 miles to the south. The Project will include construction of an internal jogging path. Therefore, any impacts from any phase of Project development will be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> Would the Project:				
<b>37. Transportation</b>				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Cause an effect upon, or a need for new or altered maintenance of roads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Cause an effect upon circulation during the Project's construction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Ranch Trip Generation and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Evaluation*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 8-26-2021 (*TG/VMT Memo, Appendix I*); *General Plan*; *REMAP Figure 7, REMAP Trails and Bikeway System*; Ordinance No. 348; *Map My County (Appendix A)*; Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) website; Riverside County Transportation Commission website; Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program); Ordinance No. 824 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Authorizing Participation in the Western Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee Program); Ordinance No. 461 (County of Riverside, State of California Road Improvement Standards and Specifications); *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, prepared by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (*OPR Advisory*) dated 12-2018; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

**Overview**

Although the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) methodology is now applied in evaluating potential transportation impacts of a project, the County's General Plan identifies standards for maintaining an adequate level of service (LOS) for County streets and intersections. To evaluate Project consistency with the General Plan Circulation Element, a Trip Generation Analysis was prepared for the Project. As previously stated, to be consistent with the 2020 CEQA Guidelines, LOS analysis is not required for the purposes of this Initial Study impact analysis.

The *TG/VMT Memo* determined that an LOS analysis was not required due to the relatively small amount of traffic that would be generated by the Project. Trips anticipated to be generated by the Project were estimated based on trip generation rates collected by the Institute of Transportation

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017. The Project’s character is unique and does not match well with standard land use/trip rates in the ITE manual. In an effort to identify potential “worst case” conditions, the *TG/VMT Memo* used the ITE trip rate for hotels. Based on these trip rates, the Project would generate approximately 302 vehicle trip-ends per day including both inbound and outbound trips. The *TG/VMT Memo* indicated that, in light of the limited number of guest accommodations (36) and a maximum number of 51 employees with only 35 onsite at any given time, this daily trip estimate is definitely conservative. Since the Project would generate fewer than 500 daily vehicle trips and is well below the County’s threshold of 100 peak hour trips, a level of service (LOS) analysis is not required per the County’s Traffic Report Guidelines<sup>10</sup>.

Based on the County’s guidelines, projects that generate less than 100 peak hour trips are exempt from preparation of level of service and operational analysis and are deemed to have a less than significant level of service (LOS) impact on the surrounding circulation system due to their low number of trips. It should be noted that a *VMT Analysis* was prepared specifically for this Project (see Threshold 37.b).

**Transit.** Bus service in western Riverside County is provided by the Riverside Transit Authority (RTA). However, there is currently no bus service in the immediate vicinity of the Project site, mainly due to its rural nature, even with the presence of Highway 74 (Pines to Palms Highway). It is unknown at this time if the RTA will provide service to this area at some point in the future.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails.** According to REMAP Figure 7, *REMAP Trails and Bikeway System*, there are no Regional Open Space Trails located along Apple Canyon Road or this portion of Highway 74 in the immediate surrounding area. There is a non-county trail planned on public and quasi-public land north of the Project site that goes east from the Hurkey Creek Campground, but it is not adjacent to the Project site. Therefore, the Project does not include construction or expansion of any trails at this time. Any impacts will be less than significant.

**Roadways.** Every county in California is required to develop a Congestion Management Program (CMP) that looks at the links between land use, transportation, and air quality. In its role as Riverside County’s Congestion Management Agency, the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) prepares and periodically updates the County’s CMP to meet federal Congestion Management System guidelines as well as state CMP legislation. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is required under federal planning regulations to determine that CMPs in the region are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. The RCTC’s current Congestion Management Program was adopted in March 2011.

The RCTC CMP does not require traffic impact assessments for development proposals if they generate less than 50 peak hour trips at a particular intersection. However, local agencies are required to maintain the minimum level of service (LOS) thresholds included in their respective general plans. If a street or highway segment included as part of the CMP falls below the adopted minimum standard of LOS E, a deficiency plan is required. The Project could conflict with the CMP if the Project were to cause the CMP facility to operate at an unacceptable LOS.

The *TG/VMT Memo* demonstrates that during weekday conditions, the proposed Project would generate 302 total trips per day including 17 AM peak hour trips and 22 PM peak hour trips. Based on the analysis it is anticipated that the Project will not generate 50 or more peak hour trips at any

<sup>10</sup> *Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service & Vehicle Miles Traveled*, County of Riverside Transportation Department, December 2020

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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intersection. While the Project does represent an increase in trips in this area, this increase is not considered cumulatively considerable due to the relatively small percentage increase in regional trips it represents.

The Project will also be required to pay its Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) and Development Impact Fees (DIF), assessed on all County projects, which collectively help reduce overall impacts to the transportation system (i.e., roads and intersections).

**Summary.** Based on this information, the Project will not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

In response to Senate Bill (SB) 743, the California Natural Resource Agency certified and adopted new CEQA Guidelines in December 2018, which now identify VMT as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impact under CEQA (Section 15064.3). Effective July 1, 2020, the previous transportation metric under CEQA, LOS, typically measured in terms of automobile delay, roadway capacity and congestion, will no longer constitute a significant environmental impact. As a result, a separate VMT analysis was prepared for this Project.

The County of Riverside has updated its traffic study guidelines as contained in the *Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service & Vehicle Miles Traveled (County of Riverside Transportation Department, December 2020)* to establish requirements and criteria for evaluating VMT on projects. Based on these guidelines, some projects are screened out from requiring a VMT analysis and if the appropriate criteria are met, the project VMT impacts are considered less than significant.

Consistent with County Guidelines, projects should evaluate available screening criteria based on their location and project type to determine if a presumption of a less than significant transportation impact can be made. The following five (5) screening thresholds are listed in the County Guidelines of which three (3) are applicable to the proposed Project and were selected for further review:

- Small Projects
- High Quality Transit Areas (HQTA)
- Local Serving Retail (not applicable)
- Affordable Housing (not applicable)
- Local Essential Service (not applicable)
- Map-Based Screening

**Small Projects Screening.** The County Guidelines lists two types of screening criteria that may apply to "small projects". The first is a vehicle trip threshold of 110 trips per day. As noted in Threshold 37.a above, the Project would exceed this daily trip threshold. County Guidelines also identifies land use projects that are forecast to generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below 3,000 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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per year are also assumed to cause a less than significant VMT impact. The proposed Project land use is not specifically identified within the County Guideline’s input factors, so an independent GHG emissions analysis was performed consistent with the methodology as described in the County Guidelines. A 2022 opening year was assumed and the 36 cabin and tents were modeled as a hotel to provide a more conservative analysis. The remaining land area was modeled as a park to ensure any water usage and other non-mobile sources associated with other uses within the Project are captured. With the conservative assumptions, the Project is estimated to generate only 584.42 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e annually which is below the 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e threshold. Therefore, the Small Projects screening criteria is met. *High Quality Transit Areas (HQTA) Screening.* Projects located within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) which means within a half-mile of an existing “major transit stop”<sup>11</sup> or an existing stop along a “high-quality transit corridor”<sup>12</sup> may be presumed to have a less than significant VMT. However, that conclusion may not be appropriate if a project:

- Has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of less than 0.75;
- Includes more parking for use by residents, customers, or employees of the project than required by the jurisdiction (if the jurisdiction requires the project to supply parking);
- Is inconsistent with the applicable Sustainable Communities Strategy (as determined by the lead agency, with input from the Metropolitan Planning Organization); or
- Replaces affordable residential units with a smaller number of moderate- or high-income residential units.

The Project is not located within a half-mile of an existing major transit stop, or along a high-quality transit corridor. Therefore, the HQTA screening criteria is not met.

*Map-Based Screening.* The County Guidelines note that projects that locate in areas with low VMT, and that incorporate similar features (i.e., density, mix of uses, transit accessibility), will tend to exhibit similarly low VMT. Urban Crossroads has obtained a VMT data table from County Staff for all TAZs within Riverside County that identifies VMT per capita and VMT per employee for the purposes of identifying low VMT areas. The data utilizes the sub-regional Riverside Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM) to measure baseline VMT performance for individual TAZ’s and a comparison was made to the applicable impact threshold (e.g., VMT per employee for office or industrial land uses and VMT per capita for residential land uses). Utilizing the County of Riverside’s general plan land use map the parcel of the Project was identified. Once identified the Project’s TAZ identification number was derived from the RIVTAM, the Project resides in TAZ 4,456. The County’s data table identifies the Project’s TAZ 4,456 to generate 28.58 VMT per employee. Whereas the County regional threshold is 14.2 VMT per employee.<sup>5</sup> The Project does not reside within a low VMT generating area. Therefore, the Map-Based screening criteria is not met.

**Summary.** The Project is anticipated to generate fewer than 500 daily vehicle trips and less than 100 peak hour trips and is, therefore, not subject to a LOS-based traffic analysis. In addition, the Project meets the Small Projects screening criteria and is therefore presumed to result in a less than significant VMT impact and no additional VMT analysis is required. Therefore, the Project will not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Impacts are less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

<sup>11</sup> Pub. Resources Code, § 21064.3 (“Major transit stop’ means a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.”).

<sup>12</sup> Pub. Resources Code, § 21155 (“For purposes of this section, a high-quality transit corridor means a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.”).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) *Would the Project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project site is in a rural mountain community south of Idyllwild and Mountain Center in the San Jacinto Mountains. It is on the south side of Apple Canyon Road, a Mountain Collector, east of Highway 74 (Pines to Palms Highway). There are agriculturally zoned properties in the surrounding area but most of the equipment appears to be stored onsite and would likely not have to travel long distances on public roads near the Project.

Apple Canyon Road and Highway 74 have no sharp curves or dangerous intersections in proximity to the Project site. In addition, sight distance along Highway 74 at the Apple Canyon Road intersection is at least 700 feet in both directions.

The Project site plan does not indicate any road improvements are required along Apple Canyon Road although the Project will add three (3) new driveway access points to the eastern portion of the site off of Apple Canyon Road.

Adjacent roadway improvements will be installed in conformance with Ordinance No. 461 and will be installed concurrently with other Project utilities or infrastructure facilities. Conditions of approval have been added to the Project to implement Ordinance No. 461. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project will not create any roadways or road improvements that could increase hazards to a circulation system design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). Any impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

d) *Would the Project cause an effect upon, or a need for new or altered maintenance of roads?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Maintenance of Apple Canyon Road may be incrementally increased by the slight increase in traffic from Project activities (*TG/VMT Memo* indicates the Project will have 302 total daily trips including 17 AM peak hour trips and 22 PM peak hour trips. However, development of the Project site would not be expected to have a significant effect upon or result in the need for new or altered maintenance of roads since no new roads are being constructed and no existing roads are being substantially altered. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

e) *Would the Project cause an effect upon circulation during the Project's construction?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

A limited potential exists to interfere with any emergency response or evacuation plan during construction. Construction work near the Project entrance on Apple Canyon Road will be minimal as no major utility work is required within Apple Canyon Road to serve the Project. Control of access will ensure emergency access to the site and Project area during construction through the submittal and approval of a traffic control plan (TCP) if required by the County.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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In addition, compliance with Ordinance No. 457 regulating construction hours of operation and other County of Riverside Transportation Department procedures and permits will ensure that the safety of the traveling public is protected during construction. Following construction, emergency access to the Project site and area will remain as it was prior to the proposed Project.

The proposed Project is required to comply with County Fire Department requirements for adequate access. Project site access and onsite circulation will provide adequate access and turning radius for emergency vehicles, consistent with the Fire Department’s requirements.

Therefore, the Project will not cause an effect upon circulation during any phase of the Project’s implementation. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

f) *Would the Project result in inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The Project will not generate substantial amounts of additional total or peak hour traffic onto Apple Canyon Road or Highway 74 so it will not result in inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses. The County of Riverside Fire Prevention Department has reviewed and conditioned the proposed Project without requiring additional emergency access or secondary access through other uses. With proper design and construction, the onsite decomposed granite (DG) roadways will safely accommodate emergency vehicles. The site will also construct three (3) access driveways from the site to Apple Canyon Road which connect to the onsite DG roadways. These requirements are standard County conditions and are considered regulatory compliance and not project specific mitigation under CEQA.

With regulatory compliance, any impacts related to inadequate emergency access in terms of response time will be reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**38. Bike Trails**

a) Include the construction or expansion of a bike system or bike lanes?

**Source(s):** REMAP Figure 7, *Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan Trails and Bikeway System*; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project include the construction or expansion of a bike system or bike lanes?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

According to REMAP Figure 7, *Riverside Extended Mountain Area Plan Trails and Bikeway System*, there are no Regional Open Space Trails (or bike lanes) along Apple Canyon Road, Highway 74, or in the general vicinity of the Project site. The closest planned trail of any kind is a non-county trail across public or quasi-public land north of the site traveling east from the Hurkey Creek Campground. There are no offroad trails or on- or offroad bicycle lanes planned for Apple

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Canyon Road or Highway 74 in the general Project area. The Project will include pedestrian pathways or informal onsite trails as needed during Project site improvements, which will include erosion control as necessary. Implementation of the Project would not involve the construction or expansion of any trails as part of the regional trail system. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES** Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or 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:

39. Tribal Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1 (k)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? (In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of Conditional Use Permit No. 210121*, prepared by Jean Keller, 12-2021 (CRA, **Appendix D**); County Archaeologist, AB52 and SB18 Tribal Consultation.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1 (k)?*
- b) *A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? (In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Tribal Cultural Resources are those resources with inherent tribal values that are difficult to identify through the same means as archaeological resources. These resources can be identified and



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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understood through direct consultation with the tribes who attach tribal value to the resource. Tribal cultural resources may include Native American archaeological sites, but they may also include other types of resources such as cultural landscapes or sacred places. The appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources is determined through consultation with tribes.

In compliance with Senate Bill 18 (SB18), Riverside County requested a Sacred Lands File search and a consultation list from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) of tribes whose historical extent includes the project area. Based on the July 23, 2021, list provided by NAHC, project notices were sent on July 27, 2021, to 11 Native American Tribal representatives. SB 18 consultations were requested by the Soboba Band of Indians and consultation was deferred by the Quechan Historic Preservation Officer. No response was received from the remainder of the tribes.

In compliance with Assembly Bill 52 (AB52), notices regarding this project were mailed to all requesting tribes on August 20, 2021. Consultations were requested by the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, the Soboba Band of Mission Indians, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. No response was received from the Ramona Band, the Pala Band the Morongo Band, the Cahuilla Band of Indians, the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Santa Rosa Band or the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indian's.

Rincon requested to consult in a letter dated August 20, 2021. The cultural report and the conditions of approval were sent to the Rincon Band on December 13, 2021. Consultation was concluded the same day.

Agua Caliente requested to consult in an email letter dated September 13, 2021. The cultural report and the conditions of approval were provided to the group on December 13, 2021. A meeting was held on December 21 in which this project was discussed. The tribe agreed with the conditions of approval and consultation was concluded the same day.

Soboba requested to consult on the project in an email letter dated August 17, 2021. The cultural report and the conditions of approval were sent to Soboba on August 17, 2021, and December 13, 2021. A follow up email was sent to Soboba on January 4, 2022, asking for further comments or concerns. No response was received from the group and consultation was concluded on January 18, 2022. No Tribal Cultural Resources were identified by any of the consulting tribes.

Although no specific Tribal Cultural Resources or impacts were identified, all of the consulting tribes expressed concerns that the project has the potential for as yet unidentified subsurface tribal cultural resources. The tribes request that a Native American monitor be present during ground disturbing activities so any unanticipated finds will be handled in a timely and culturally appropriate manner. Based on information from the County Archaeologist, consulting Native American tribes, and County Planning Staff. The Tribe's concerns are addressed in the standard Conditions of Approval (COAs) identified in Thresholds 9.a-c of this IS/MND. These COAs incorporate the recommended conditions of approval for cultural resources as prepared by County staff in their entirety. With implementation of these measures, the proposed Project would not 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 Cultural Native American tribe, and that is 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 is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to

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be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1.

**COA Monitoring:** A copy of all agreements between the Project developer and the appropriate Band of Luiseño Indians shall be provided to the County for retention. Field inspections by County Staff shall verify that all aspects of the agreement are being implemented by the developer, professional monitor and Tribal monitors, during ground disturbing activities. Any cultural resources reports produced as a result of Project monitoring shall be provided to the County within 60 days of completion. All reports and field notes shall be retained in the Project file. The Planning Department will also monitor any potential changes to the Project and their impacts on prehistoric resources.

With the inclusion of the County’s standard Conditions of Approval, impacts to any previously unidentified Tribal Cultural Resources would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS** Would the Project:

**40. Water**

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage systems, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Wellness Center Water System, Preliminary Technical Report*, prepared by Specialized Utilities Services Program, 4-24-2023 (**Appendix G1**); *Well Inspection Report*, prepared by Heritage Well Service, 4-8-2021 (*HWS 2021*, **Appendix G2**); *Well Sampling Analytical Report*, prepared by Babcock Laboratories, Inc., 8-3-2021 (*BL 2021*, **Appendix G3**); *Project-Specific Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023 (*WQMP*, **Appendix G4**); *Preliminary Hydrology and Hydraulics Report for The Ridge – Idyllwild Guest Ranch*, prepared by JLC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., 5-26-2023 (*Hydrology Study*, **Appendix G5**); *ATS System Design*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022 (**Appendix L**); *OWTS Report*, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021 (**Appendix M**); and *Project Plans* (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage systems, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The applicant indicates the Project will have a small ground-mounted array of solar panels south of the camp buildings. There will be two propane storage tanks, one near the pool and one small tank for an emergency generator. The camp kitchen will be powered by electricity and will not cook with propane or natural gas.

Water

The Project site is currently vacant and does not utilize available onsite water supplies, An agricultural water well is located in the eastern portion on the Project site just south of Apple Canyon Road and just east of Hurkey Creek. The well was tested in 2021 for pumping capacity (*HWS 2021*) and water quality (*BL 2021*). As of mid 2021, the existing well produces approximately 24 gallons per minute (*HWS 2021*) and its water quality is consistent with the various drinking water standards established by the federal, state, or county governments (*BL 2021*). However, the Project Plans indicate the existing well will be used to irrigate the agriculture and landscaping onsite, while a new well will be drilled for domestic potable use. A Ridge Wellness Center Water System Preliminary Technical Report (PTR) was prepared for the Project and most recently updated in April 2023. The Project is proposing to construct a new privately owned public water system to provide water for their planned facilities and activities. The water system will have one connection, the Wellness Center Building, and will be classified Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC) water system. It will be owned and managed by the Project owner/operator under the jurisdiction of the County of Riverside Environmental Health Division (County), and the Division of Drinking Water (DDW) of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The PTR is part of the new water system permit application to DDW.

Title 22 of California Code of Regulations CCR requires a public water system to have the capacity to meet the Maximum Day Demand (MDD). The PTR indicates the system sized the new well and storage tank to meet the MDD, and the booster pumps are sized to supply peak hour demand. The piping and pressure tank will allow the distribution system to meet peak instantaneous demand as needed for brief periods. These are typical design considerations for a water system at this scale and are expected to meet demand under all conditions and ensure a reliable, safe water supply for operation of the entire facility. Based on the size and anticipated use of the facility, the PTR estimated the MDD of the entire site would be 15.1 gallons per minute (gpm) for the buildings, including baths and showers, and for pool operation.

A new drinking water well will be drilled and constructed on the Project site. The local aquifer is part of the Hemet Lake Valley groundwater basin, and drilling logs from nearby wells (within one mile radius of the site) show granite formations below 100 feet of depth. The well is expected to be approximately 300 feet deep with a design capacity of 20 gpm which is sized to exceed the MDD by 30 percent.

The water from the existing onsite well was tested in May 2021 and showed no contaminant levels above any of the Maximum Contaminant Limits (MCLs). Based on the water quality results from the existing well on the parcel, the new well is expected to have acceptable water quality for potable use (i.e., drinking water) and therefore would not require treatment. However, chlorine disinfection will be included in the new system and appropriate treatment will be provided if any contaminants are found in the new well and the permit application will be modified accordingly.

The proposed water system does not have an additional source of supply or emergency connection with capacity to meet the MDD. A storage tank with capacity of 22,000 gallons would typically be

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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installed to meet storage requirements from Title 22. However, the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health indicates that having a backup generator to power the domestic well will permit less static storage. The PTR therefore recommends one 5,000 gallon steel water storage tank to buffer peak demands on the Project system. The design will include a storage tank bypass system to allow the tank to be taken offline if needed for repairs.

The proposed fire protection system will also be supplied by the existing irrigation well. The fire storage volume will be as determined by the Riverside County Fire Department. The fire protection system will be independent of the domestic water system and have no interties.

The site currently has an irrigation system consisting of a well, one 5,000 gallon storage tank, three 85 gallon pressurized tanks, and one 2 hp Berkeley booster pump. The irrigation well is located on the northwest side of the property and has a capacity of 24 gpm. The well will not be connected to the new domestic water system but will continue to be used for irrigation and fire suppression at the property. The existing irrigation distribution systems will be independent of the proposed domestic water system with no interties.

A feasibility analysis was also conducted as part of the RTP to determine if it would be more practical and cost effective to provide water to the Project site via an existing source/water system. The closest most appropriate existing water service to the site would be from the Lake Hemet Mutual Water District (LHMWD) which provides potable water to Lake Hemet Campground with a population of up to 600 (300 residential and 300 transient) through 287 residential service connections. LHMWD facilities are located approximately one mile to the south of the Project site and its source of water is one active well (Pasture Well 02). LHMWD has four storage tanks on the hill north of the campground and the distribution system consists of a 4-inch pipeline and no booster pumps. The system is gravity fed and adequate pressures are maintained throughout the system by elevation difference between the storage tanks and service connection points.

LHMWD was contacted in December 2021 to explore the feasibility of supplying water to the proposed Project rather than construction of a new onsite well. The LHMWD General Manager indicated that such a connection would be difficult construction-wise, very costly, and LHMWD is currently under a moratorium on new connections due to supply capacity limitations. The PTR estimated a new water system with an onsite well would cost under \$800,000 while extending service from LHMWD would cost over \$2 million (PTR Tables 3 and 4).

Assuming an average daily consumption of 75 gallons per person, the Project could consume as much as 8,000 gallons per day or 2.9 million gallons (approximately 9 acre-feet) per year. As outlined above, a water storage tank of sufficient size will be installed along with pumps and underground piping to convey water to the various buildings/use areas of the Project. Development of the eastern portion of the site is not expected to result in any significant impacts (e.g., dust/air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, etc.) and no offsite water system improvements are needed.

It should be noted the Project will have low intensity activities with one-story low buildings that are intended to be eco-friendly and environmentally conscious so it will be specifically designed to conserve water (i.e., low impact development or LID). The Project buildings will also be required to meet the County's LID ordinance and state water conservation goals.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The new onsite public water system will be designed and permitted through the County Department of Health and the State to supply potable water to the occupied buildings. A separate fire system for building sprinklers and hydrants will be installed that will provide adequate volume and flow for fire protection per the County Fire Department requirements. The system will include a connection from the well to the holding tanks. The new system will be approved as part of the final building plan permit process and obtain a separate permit. The new well and public water system will meet anticipated water demand for all Project phases and new buildings. Provision for this new water system is required as part of the County’s standard conditions of approval, which are considered regulatory compliance and not unique mitigation under CEQA. With implementation of this measure as a condition of approval, potential impacts related to water supply for domestic consumption and fire protection will be less than significant.

Wastewater/Sewer

The Project site is currently vacant and is not served by either piped sewer or subsurface septic systems. The Percolation Testing and Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Investigation indicated portions of the site have shallow groundwater, on the order of 7 to 10 feet below ground surface in some areas. As a result of the shallow groundwater, the use of a typical conventional septic system with leach field is not feasible.

The Project will utilize an Aerobic Treatment System (ATS) with shallow near surface GeoFlow drip lines for its sewage disposal which will be located in the eastern portion of the site. This is mainly due to the presence of shallow groundwater. The area of the shallow subsurface GeoFlow drip lines is delineated on the project plans. These areas will remain native and undisturbed.

The plans and related data of the proposed ATS system have already been submitted and approved by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH has determined this system would be able to provide adequate wastewater service to the proposed Project, including day/weekend events and other special activities. The ATS system has been designed to remain under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold which would allow this system to remain under the regulation of the County rather than the regional board. Effluent from this system will be dispersed in the garden area using GeoFlow drip irrigation. There will be no direct effluent discharges to the creek and all system components will be located at a minimum of 100 feet from the identified 100-year flood zone on the site. This system will meet the design requirements of the Uniform Plumbing Code and County DEH. The ATS system is sized to have an average daily flow of 8,900 gpd as shown in the calculations section of the ATS System Design documentation.

The Project will install the new ATS system subject to design and permitting requirements of the DEH which has authority under the Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) to approve this system as it is under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold for LAMP jurisdiction. Additionally, the County of Riverside Building and Safety Department has standard conditions that will prevent impacts on existing or proposed onsite treatment systems. These are considered regulatory compliance and not project unique mitigation. No portion of the proposed Project will result in grading that affects or negates subsurface sewage disposal systems. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Since the Project will be installing the new individual sewage system in accordance with County regulations, any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Stormwater/Drainage

As previously discussed in Section 23 of this Initial Study (Hydrology and Water Quality), all new development in the County of Riverside is required to comply with provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, including Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR), and for properties located within the Santa Ana River Watershed - the 2010 General Permit Number R8-2010-0033 (County MS4 Permit as enforced by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Board (SARWQCB)).

Additionally, there are no storm drains on the Project site or within the project vicinity.

The Project *Hydrology Study* and *WQMP* concluded that development of the new structures will require construction and maintenance of a detention basin that will comply with NPDES, WDR, MS4, and SARWQCB requirements, the construction of which will have a less than significant impact on storm water drainage systems.

*b) Would the Project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

As previously discussed in Threshold 40.a, the Project will provide a public water supply and system to the site to meet the anticipated future water needs of the Project. A domestic water well is located just south of Apple Canyon Road and just east of Hurkey Creek on the Project site. The well was tested in 2021 for pumping capacity (*HWS 2021*) and water quality (*BL 2021*). As of mid 2021, the existing well produces approximately 24 gallons per minute (*HWS 2021*) and its water quality is generally consistent with drinking water standards established by the federal, state, or county governments (*BL 2021*). The Project engineer has indicated the onsite well can provide adequate water supply that meets health and safety standards. However, the well will need to be upgraded to domestic service standards and certified as adequate by the County Health Department for the exclusive use of the proposed guest ranch based on full occupancy (105 persons). Assuming an average daily consumption of 75 gallons per person, the Project could consume as much as 8,000 gallons per day or 2.9 million gallons (approximately 9 acre-feet) per year. This amount of water would require pumping about 6 hours per day at max. flow or 12 hours at 50% flow. A water storage tank of sufficient size will be installed along with underground piping to convey water to the various buildings/use areas of the Project.

The new onsite public water system will be designed and permitted through the County Department of Health to supply potable water to the occupied buildings as well as provide adequate volume and flow for fire protection per the County Fire Department requirements. Use of the existing onsite well and the proposed new onsite well and water system is expected to meet anticipated water demand for the Project. Provision for this new water system is required as part of the County’s standard conditions of approval. With implementation of standard conditions of approval, potential impacts related to water supply for domestic consumption and fire protection will be less than significant.

Therefore, sufficient water supplies are available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Any impacts are considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**41. Sewer**

a) Require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities, including septic systems, or expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects?

b) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may service the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?

**Source(s):** ATS System Design, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 8-29-2022 (**Appendix L**); OWTS Report, prepared by Earth Strata Geotechnical Services, Inc., 11-30-2021 (**Appendix M**); and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

a) *Would the Project require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities, including septic systems, or expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Refer also to Thresholds 18.c and 40.a. The Project site will require a new ATS. This ATS system is a design alternative solution to a typical septic system and utilizes shallow near surface GeoFlow drip lines for its sewage disposal which will be located in the eastern portion of the site. This is mainly due to the presence of shallow groundwater. The plans and related data of the proposed ATS system have already been submitted and approved by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH has determined this system would be able to provide adequate wastewater service to the proposed Project, including day/weekend events and other special activities. The ATS system has been designed to remain under the 10,000 gallons per day (gpd) threshold which would allow this system to remain under the regulation of the County rather than the regional board.

Other than the proposed onsite septic system, implementation of the proposed Project will not require, or result in, the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the Project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may service the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?*

**No Impact**

The Project site’s development plan proposes an on-site ATS system as described above rather than a traditional septic system, so the Project will not be connecting to any private

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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wastewater/sewer treatment facilities. This criterion is not applicable to the proposed Project. There will be no impact.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**42. Solid Waste**

a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid wastes including the CIWMP (County Integrated Waste Management Plan)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan EIR No. 521, Section 4.17.4, *Solid Waste Management*; Riverside County Municipal Code; Assembly Bill (AB) 939 Riverside County Department of Waste Resources (RCDWR), Planning Section and Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan; CalRecycle, SWIS Facility Detail, El Sobrante Landfill, 33-AA-0217; El Sobrante Landfill Fact Sheet, issued by Waste Management of California; El Sobrante Landfill Annual Monitoring Report, January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, by USA Waste of CA, Inc., 9-2020.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project generate solid waste in excess of State or Local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Solid waste management in Riverside County is required to comply with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, Chapter 1095 (AB 939) which redefined solid waste management in terms of both objectives and planning responsibilities for local jurisdictions and the state. AB 939 was adopted in an effort to reduce the volume and toxicity of solid waste that is landfilled and incinerated by requiring local governments to prepare and implement plans to improve the management of waste resources. AB 939 required each of the cities and unincorporated portions of counties throughout the state to divert a minimum of 25% by 1995 and 50% of the solid waste landfilled by the year 2000. To attain these goals for reductions in disposal, AB 939 established a planning hierarchy utilizing new integrated solid waste management practices.

The Countywide Summary Plan contains goals and policies, as well as a summary of integrated waste management issues faced by the County and its cities. The Summary Plan summarizes the steps needed to cooperatively implement programs among the County's jurisdictions to meet and maintain the 50% diversion mandates. The Countywide Siting Element demonstrates that there are at least 15 years of remaining disposal capacity to serve all the jurisdictions within the



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County. If there is not adequate capacity, a discussion of alternative disposal sites and additional diversion programs must be included in the Siting Element.

The Riverside County Department of Waste Resources (RCDWR) - Planning Section ensures that the Department's planned and proposed waste management activities and projects are in compliance with applicable federal, State and local land use and environmental laws, regulations, and ordinances.

The RCDWR operates six (6) active landfills (Badlands, Blythe, Desert Center, Lamb Canyon, Mecca II and Oasis) and administers a contract agreement for the private El Sobrante Landfill serving the greater Riverside County area. The RCDWR also oversees several transfer station leases, as well as a number of recycling and other special waste diversion programs.

Municipal waste collection services for the unincorporated East Hemet/Paradise Valley area (Project site is a part) is provided by Waste Management, Inc. The Project site is located in the primary service area of the Lamb Canyon Landfill with additional capacity available at the El Sobrante Landfill for all non-hazardous, non-recyclable, non-green municipal waste.

The Project site is located approximately 23.3 miles southeast of the Lamb Canyon Landfill and 46 miles east/southeast of the El Sobrante Landfill.

Lamb Canyon Landfill

The Lamb Canyon Landfill is a Class III municipal solid waste facility owned and operated by the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources (RCDWR). It is located in the unincorporated Badlands/Lamb Canyon area of Riverside County, south of Interstate 10 (I-10) and the City of Beaumont, and north of the City of San Jacinto at 16411 Lamb Canyon Road (State Route 79). The maximum permitted capacity is 38,953,653 cubic yards as of January 8, 2015 (most recent published date available) providing capacity and continued operations through April 1, 2029 (estimated closure date).

El Sobrante Landfill

The Project site is located within the service area of the El Sobrante Landfill, a service area that includes the cities/communities within southwestern Riverside County. Located near the center of the highly populated western third of Riverside County, it processes approximately 43% of Riverside County's annual waste, according to Waste Management, Inc., the landfill's operator.

The El Sobrante Landfill is located approximately 34 miles west/northwest of the Project site in the unincorporated Temescal Canyon area of Riverside County between the City of Lake Elsinore and the City of Corona, east of Interstate 15 and Temescal Canyon Road, and south of Cajalco Road, at 10910 Dawson Canyon Road, Corona, CA 91719. The El Sobrante Landfill facility currently comprises a total area of 1,322 acres which includes a 495-acre footprint permitted for landfill operations, and a 688-acre wildlife preserve.

Based on 307 working days, an average of 11,139 tons of waste are received at the landfill on a daily basis. This is substantially lower than the maximum 16,054 tons per day allowed under the current permit. As of November 9, 2018, a modified Solid Waste Facilities Permit for the El

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Sobrante Landfill was issued which revised the landfill's Estimated Closure Year from 2045 under the former 2009 permit, to 2051 pursuant to the current permit.

There is not a specific land use category in the County General Plan and its EIR for the Project's proposed "guest ranch" so it is difficult to estimate solid waste generation from the Project based solely on land use category (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial). The CalRecycle general solid waste generation rate of 10 pounds per person per day will be used to roughly estimate solid waste that could be generated by the Project. It is estimated the Project could have 1-2 guests per cabin (36 total cabins) plus 35 employees per shift. This results in a range of approximately 71-107 persons that could be expected to be on the site each operating day. Assuming all the cabins are occupied by 1.5 guests and the ranch operates every day of the year, the average of 89 persons on the Project site each day could generate 890 pounds per day or 162.4 tons per year of solid waste that would require disposal at County landfills. It should be noted that the ranch will have low intensity activities and one-story buildings as part of a guest ranch that emphasizes environmentally conscious programs, so this is a "worst case" estimate of potential waste generation for the Project.

This amount of waste represents 0.01 percent of the daily disposal capacity of the Lamb Canyon Landfill and 0.004 percent of the disposal capacity of the El Sobrante Landfill. The amount of additional solid waste generated by the Project operation would have an incremental, but nominal, impact on the existing solid waste infrastructure at the Lamb Canyon (primary) and El Sobrante Landfills. Therefore, the proposed Project use would not 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. Additionally, County staff recommends standard conditions of approval for waste management that shall apply to the Project. With this regulatory compliance, impacts related to solid waste generation would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Would the Project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid wastes including the CIWMP (County Integrated Waste Management Plan)?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

All institutional land uses within the unincorporated Riverside County area, including the Project site, which is located in the San Jacinto Mountains, generate waste and are required to coordinate with the County's contracted waste hauler (Waste Management, Inc.) to collect solid waste on a common schedule as established in applicable local, regional, and State programs.

Additionally, all development within the unincorporated County jurisdiction is required to comply with applicable elements of AB 1327, Chapter 18 (California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991), AB 939 (CalRecycle), Title 8 of the County Municipal Code, and other local, State, and federal solid waste disposal standards.

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939) requires every city and county in the state to prepare a Source Reduction and Recycling Element to its Solid Waste Management Plan, that identifies how each jurisdiction will meet the mandatory state diversion goal of 50 percent by and after the year 2000. The purpose of AB 939 is to "reduce, recycle, and re-use solid waste generated in the state to the maximum extent feasible." As set forth in Threshold 42.a,

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in response to the State requirements, the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources prepared the CIWMP.

All solid waste disposals within the unincorporated County of Riverside are subject to the requirements set forth in *Title 8, Health and Safety*, Chapter 8.136 - Comprehensive Collection and Disposal of Solid Waste within Specified Unincorporated Areas and Chapter 8.24 - County Solid Waste Facilities, other, as provided in the Municipal Code. Chapters 8.136 and 8.24 provide integrated waste management guidelines for service, prohibitions, and provisions of service. The provisions of service require that the County of Riverside shall provide for or furnish integrated waste management services relating to the collection, transfer, and disposal of refuse, recyclables, and compostables within and throughout the unincorporated County jurisdiction. The Project would be required to comply with applicable elements of AB 1327, Chapter 18 (California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991), AB 939, Title 8 of the County Municipal Code, and other applicable local, State, and federal solid waste disposal standards as a matter of regulatory policy, thereby ensuring that the solid waste stream to the waste disposal facilities is reduced in accordance with existing regulations. With regulatory compliance, any impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

### 43. Utilities

Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects?

a) Electricity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Natural gas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Communications systems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Street lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Other governmental services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Ridge Ranch Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, prepared by Urban Crossroads, 11-19-2021 (*AQ/GHG Analysis, Appendix B*); Ordinance No. 461 (County of Riverside Road Improvement Standards and Specifications); Anza Electric Co-Op website; Ordinance No. 655 (An Ordinance of the County Of Riverside Regulating Light Pollution); Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program); Riverside County Network of Care website; and *County of Riverside General Plan EIR No. 521, Sec.4.10 Energy Resources*.

### **Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to electricity?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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There are electricity connections currently serving the Project site. Electricity lines are located along Apple Canyon Road frontage immediately north of the Project site and are provided by the Anza Electric Co-Op which provides electricity to this rural area of the County. According to the *AQ/GHG Analysis*, the proposed Project will use electricity for a variety of operational activities including, but not limited to, building heating and cooling, lighting, appliances, electronics, mechanical equipment, electric vehicle charging, and parking lot lighting. Indirect electricity usage is also required to supply, distribute, and treat water for the Project.

Annual electricity consumption for the proposed Project upon full buildout is estimated to be 546,726 kilowatt hours (kWh) or 1,865.4 million British thermal units (Btu)<sup>13</sup> per year of electricity under “worst case” conditions.

The Project’s impact is considered less than significant as the Project will be required to comply with the mandatory requirements of California’s Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) and Green Building Standards (CALGreen, Title 24, Part 11). California’s building energy efficiency standards are some of the strictest in the nation and the Project’s compliance with California’s building code will ensure that wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary consumption of energy is minimized. The building standards code is designed to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool a building, reduce energy usage for lighting and appliances and promote usage of energy from renewable sources. It should also be noted this Project will have a strong environmentally conscious orientation so energy conservation will be one of their primary goals.

Adequate commercial electricity supplies are presently available to meet the incremental increase in demand attributed to the Project. Provision of electricity to the Project site is not anticipated to require or result in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, the construction or relocation of which would cause significant environmental effects to electricity. It should also be noted that the Project plans show a potential future solar system, but no entitlement is requested in the current application for such a facility. Impacts in this regard will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

*b) Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to natural gas?*

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project is expected to use propane for gas to supply energy for cooking, heating and other operational applications associated with the guest ranch operation. The Project is not anticipated to have natural gas supplied to the site. All propane used by the Project is expected to be imported and stored on-site via on-site storage tanks. The *AQ/GHG Analysis* estimates the Project will consume 1,863 cubic feet or 186,294 million Btu<sup>14</sup> per year of propane per year.

The Project proposes the use of propane gas and will not connect to the natural gas system. Propane is supplied by several private companies within the region and can be provided to the site via truck. Therefore, there are adequate propane gas supplies available to meet the incremental increase in demand attributed to the Project. The proposed Project would not require or result in

<sup>13</sup> Assumes 1 kWh = 3,412 Btu

<sup>14</sup> Assumes 1 cubic foot of gas = 1,000 Btu

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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construction, expansion, or relocation of natural gas facilities that could result in a significant environmental effect. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- c) *Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to communications systems?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

Communication systems for the Project area are provided by Frontier Communication as well as other private telecommunications providers, all of which are private companies that provide connection to the communication system on an as needed basis. No expansion of facilities will be necessary to connect the Project to the existing communication system located adjacent to the Project site, and therefore, would not cause a significant environmental effect to communications systems. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- d) *Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to street lighting?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project will not require the installation of any new or additional streetlights along the public Apple Canyon Road rights-of-way.

Any potential impacts from light and glare are discussed in Section 2 (Mt. Palomar Observatory) and Section 3 (Other Lighting Issues) of this Initial Study. The Project would not require new streetlights or relocation of existing streetlights and, as such, there will be no significant environmental effects to street lighting, although there will be onsite building and parking area lights for safety and security. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- e) *Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to maintenance of public facilities, including roads?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project will have a less than significant impact on public facilities. Riverside County Ordinance No. 659 establishes a developer impact fee to mitigate the cost of public facilities, including roads. The Project does not include roads or road improvements requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities.

Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate fees set forth in the Ordinance. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- f) *Would the Project impact the following facilities requiring or resulting in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to other governmental services?*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Less Than Significant Impact**

Regional Multi-Service Centers impacts are typically attributed to residential development. This is reflected in Ordinance No. 659. Regional Multi-Service Centers are located throughout the County and provide a variety of services on a regional basis with events ranging from: athletic programs, wellness programs, senior citizen activities, arts and crafts, etc. The Project does not have a new residential component; it is an institutional “guest ranch” facility.

Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate fees set forth in the Ordinance to offset any incremental increase in or demand for such services generated by the Project. Payment of such fees would ensure that the Project would not require or result in the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, whereby the construction or relocation would cause significant environmental effects to other governmental services. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation measures are required.

**Monitoring:** No mitigation monitoring is required.

**WILDFIRE** If located in or near a State Responsibility Area (“SRA”), lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone, or other hazardous fire areas that may be designated by the Fire Chief, would the Project:

**44. Wildfire Impacts**

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Expose people or structures either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** *Map My County (Appendix A); The Ridge Guest Ranch Fire Protection Plan, APN 568-070-021, prepared by Firewise 2000, LLC, 6-12-2023 (FPP, Appendix H); Project Plans (Appendix K); General Plan; Ordinance No. 787 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Adopting the 2016 California Fire Code as Amended); California Department*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) website; Riverside County General Plan, Chapter 6, Safety Element, Figure S-8 *Wind Erosion Susceptibility Areas*; and Ordinance No. 659 (An Ordinance of the County of Riverside Establishing a Development Impact Fee Program).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) *Would the Project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

***Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated***

According to the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) and *Map My County*, the Project site is: 1) Classified by Riverside County as being in a Very High Fire Hazard Area; and 2) Located in a State Fire Responsibility Area (SRA).

The Project site currently has a three access points on Apple Canyon Road, approximately ¼ mile easterly from the intersection with Highway 74. Onsite circulation will be via an internal loop decomposed granite drive aisle, that circles back to Apple Canyon Road. The Project area is rural and mountainous in nature and there is a high potential for wildfire to affect the region. Highway 74 is a community evacuation route as part of the County’s adopted emergency response plan/emergency evacuation plan.

The vegetation on the portions of the site that have not been developed or previously disturbed (or landscaped) consist of a number of native associations including Chaparral / Coastal Sage Scrub, Jeffrey Pine Woodland, Willow Riparian areas, and ruderal (weedy) areas. These vegetation associations are adapted to and/or highly susceptible to wildland fires, especially during times when hot dry Santa Ana winds blow across the region.

The proposed Project would convert the property into a wellness retreat. Accordingly, several structures will be built, including a guest cabin with 30 rooms, a common area building, an activity hub building, a basecamp, and an administrative building.

The Project will introduce additional persons into the area which has high fire risks. Therefore, a *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* was prepared to evaluate the proposed guest ranch to ensure it will not expose people or structures to significant risks or hazards from wildfires. The *FPP* takes into account the property’s location, topography, geology, combustible vegetation (fuel types), climatic conditions and fire history. It also considers water supply, access, structure ignitability and fire resistive building materials, fire protection systems and equipment, impacts to existing emergency services, defensible space, and vegetation management.

The *FPP* proposes fuel modification requirements to effectively reduce the potential exposure of people and structures onsite from a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires. In this way it would help reduce a potential increase in the need for fire protection services by the RCFD.

The *FPP* recommends implementation and maintenance of the following four (4) Fuel Treatment Zones as described in the 2019 California Fire Code, each with their own characteristics, required

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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landscaping, and required maintenance:

- Fuel Treatment Zone 1**, the Immediate Zone, is the area from the exterior wall surface of the building extending 5-feet on a horizontal plane. The intent of Zone 1 is to create a landscape absent of all combustible materials. This zone includes the level graded area under and around all decks and requires the most stringent wildland fire fuel reduction and maintenance. This area shall be kept clear of combustibles, plant-based landscaping mulch, and all large shrubs and trees. It may have a few nonwoody plants, generally confined to pots or containers, that are low growing. Plants that grow in water are also a good choice. No plants shall be grown beneath windows or adjacent to doorways. The soil surface may be bare ground or covered with hardscape features such as pavers, gravel, concrete, rock, or other non-combustible material. Water features and statuary developed from non-combustible materials are also a good choice for this zone.
- Fuel Treatment Zone 2** – Owner Maintained Intermediate Zone, is commonly called the defensible space zone for fire suppression forces and protects structures from radiant and convective heat. Zone 2 consists of the area from 5'-50' from the exterior wall surface extending out in a horizontal plane. Within the zone, flammable native vegetation shall be removed and replanted with drought tolerant, fire resistive, irrigated, plantings as approved by the Riverside County FD. (see Appendix A). Firewood shall not be stacked under tree canopy and stored at least 10 feet from property lines. Zone 2 fuel treatments are measured from the exterior walls of the structure or from the most distal point of a combustible projection, an attached accessory structure, or an accessory structure within 10 feet of a habitable structure. It provides the best protection against the high radiant heat produced by a wildfire and a generally cleared area in which fire suppression forces can operate during wildfire events.
- Fuel Treatment Zone 3A** - the Extended Zone, is the area beyond Zone 2, from 50'-100' in a horizontal plane. All highly combustible native vegetation is excluded within the zone. Zone 3A may be partially, or non-irrigated, depending upon the plant species selected for planting. Irrigation shall not be required for natural slopes when there is a danger of slope failure. The goal within Zone 3A is the reduction or selective clearing of existing native vegetation and dense chaparral by 50% and the planting and maintenance of only approved species.
- Fuel Treatment Zone 3B** – Bio-retention Basin - Owner Maintained, is located on the southeastern corner of the property, west of the planned solar farm and planter areas. This area, as part of the Water Quality Management Plan, has been designed to reduce storm water and soil runoff from the site. The basin will be planted with native plants materials and maintained to the required maintenance and landscaping standards listed for Zone 3A. Within Zone 3B will be thinning zones beginning at the edge of Zone 2 and including all natural and manufactured slopes. The specified intent is to achieve and maintain an overall 50% reduction in the canopy and removal of 100% of the dead and dying plant material following the growth cycle of the vegetation. Removal of prohibited and invasive species is permitted. The Project owner(s) is responsible for the maintenance of the area to Zone 3B standards as needed.

The *FPP* also includes supplemental fuel treatment zones for the onsite roadways, setback areas from the adjacent U.S. Forest Service land, Hurkey Creek setback zone, permanent markers for each zone, and a Shelter-In-Place (SIP) location and plan for how onsite sheltering will be implemented if needed. The *FPP* lists construction practices and materials to minimize fire risk, specifications for the onsite water systems (domestic and fire) including two onsite wells (one of



Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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them new with this Project), and three water storage tanks.

With implementation of the *FPP*, the Project will not result in a significant risk to persons or property on the Project site from wildfire or a significant increase in the need for fire protection services from the RCFD. **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1** is recommended to assure the site design requirements of the FPP are implemented during Project construction and operation.

All new facilities will be constructed to meet or exceed current California Fire and Building Code requirements. The Project will also serve as a demonstration for new fire suppression techniques and building construction/design.

A limited potential exists for the Project to interfere with an emergency response or evacuation plan during construction of the property. Control of access will ensure emergency access to the site and Project area during construction through the submittal and approval of a traffic control plan (TCP). The TCP is designed to mitigate any construction circulation impacts. The TCP is a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation under CEQA.

The proposed Project will be reviewed, and conditions of approval will be required to address any potential impacts to Fire Resources, consistent with the Fire Hazards section of the Safety Element of the General Plan and Ordinance No. 787. As part of the Project approval(s), standard conditions are assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to fire services. Prior to final map recordation, prior to grading permit issuance, prior to building permit issuance, and prior to building final inspection, the Project will need to demonstrate compliance with Ordinance No. 787. Adherence to Ordinance No. 787 and other fire protection regulatory compliance are typically standard conditions of approval and are not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

Another standard condition assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to fire services is Ordinance No. 659. Applicant payment of Development Impact Fees (DIF) for non-residential uses for fire protection will be required prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Adherence to Ordinance No. 659 is typically a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA. The Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate DIF fees set forth in the Ordinance. Adherence to Ordinance No. 659 and other fire protection regulatory compliance are typically standard conditions of approval and are not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

Following construction, emergency access to the Project site and area will remain the same as at present although human activity on the site will increase over existing conditions. In addition, the Project will implement the recommendations of the *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* as outlined in **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1** to help protect guests and employees from potential wildfire hazards and facilitate emergency access and evacuation.

With implementation of standard conditions of approval, fire protection regulatory compliance, and **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**, the Project will not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan with implementation of standard conditions of approval and fire protection regulatory compliance. Any impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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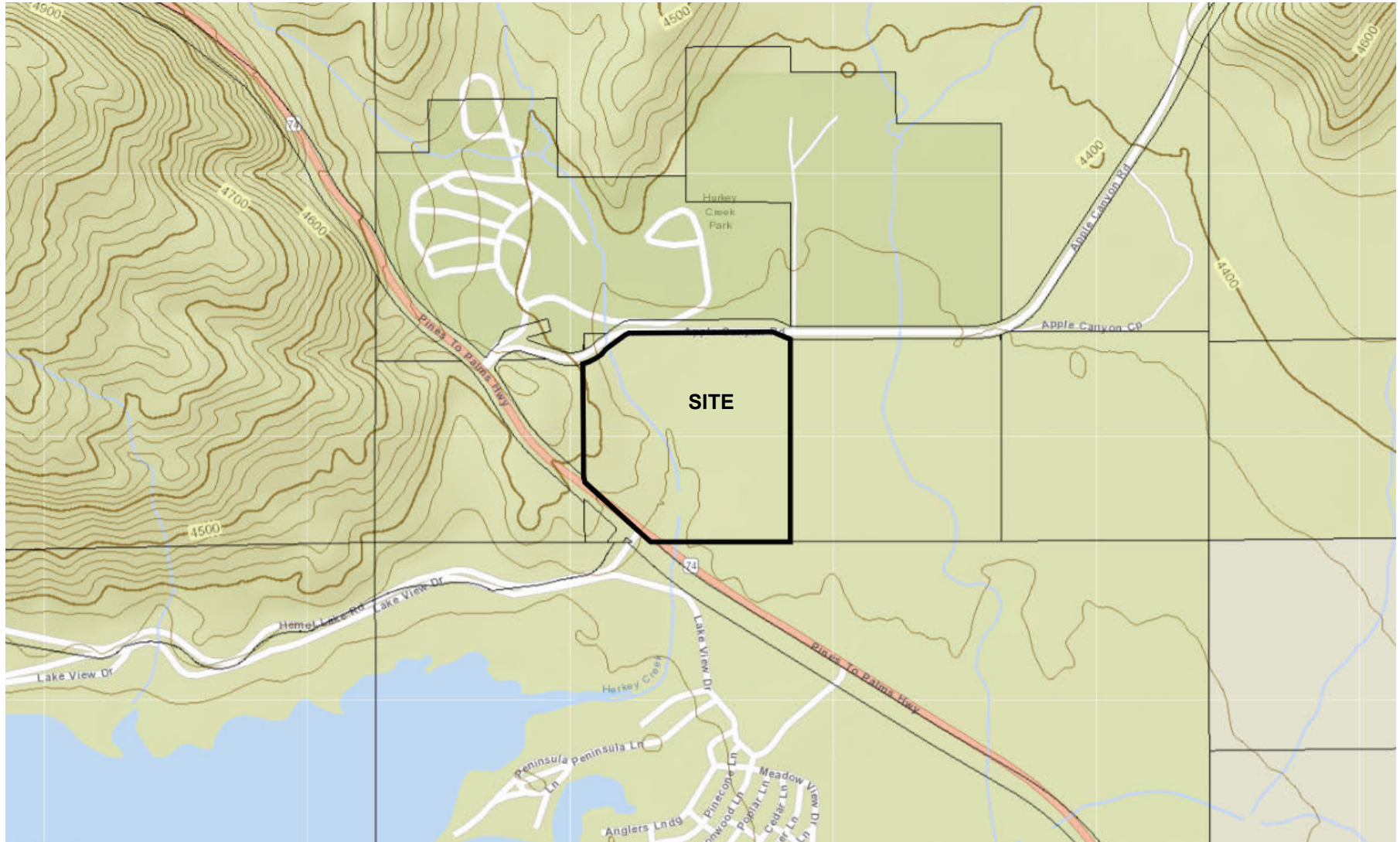
- b) *Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

***Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated***

According to the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) and *Map My County*, the entire Project site and surrounding areas are located within an SRA and a Very High Fire Hazard Area.

The Project site topography rises from the eastern portion of the site, with a wide flood plain in the western third of the site, then drops down toward Lake Hemet to the west-southwest. The site is in a very rural area with limited regional access (see **Figure 44-1, Topographic Map**). The only access route to and from the site is Apple Canyon Road, a two-lane rural road that connects with Highway 74 approximately 0.25-mile to the west. As discussed in Threshold 5.a, the site has a number of limitations, and the Project creates additional constraints that could exacerbate the potential risks of wildfire to the improvements and occupants of the Project. Even with these constraints, implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1** is recommended to assure that Project occupants will not be exposed to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

**FIGURE 44-1  
Topographic Map**



Source: Map My County [https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC\\_Public](https://gis.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public)

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The Project proposes new structures which will be built to the most recent fire codes. These codes are designed to suppress fire risks including those from wildfires.

Per the County of Riverside General Plan Safety Element Figure S-8, the Project site and surrounding area has a moderate wind susceptibility. The Project would be required to comply with California Fire Code Chapter 47 and the Riverside County No. 787 Fire Code, which provides requirements to reduce the potential of fires that include vegetation management, construction materials and methods, installation of automatic sprinkler systems, adequate fire flows, etc.

With implementation of standard conditions of approval, fire protection regulatory compliance, and **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**, the Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, or would expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Any impacts will be less than significant with standard conditions and the recommended mitigation.

- c) *Would the Project 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?*

**Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated**

The entire Project site is located within an SRA and a very high fire hazard area (see related discussion in Threshold 44.a). All proposed facilities will be constructed to meet or exceed current California Fire and Building Code requirements, including any private-use solar panel arrays if installed in the future. The Project does not include and or 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. The existing Apple Canyon Road and utilities are in place and currently serving the Project site. Highway 74 and Apple Canyon Road serve as fire breaks to the west and the north of the site. Refer also to Thresholds 44.a and 44.b for Project conformance to applicable fire-related codes to reduce the potential for wildfire hazards to occur. Any impacts will be less than significant with implementation of the recommended **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**.

- d) *Would the Project 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?*

**Less Than Significant Impact**

The entire Project site is located within a State Fire Responsibility Area (SRA) and a very high fire hazard area. Refer also to Thresholds 23.e and 14.a relative to the potential for flooding and/or landslides to occur.

The site elevation varies from approximately 4,353.6 feet (minimum) to 4,407 feet (maximum) above mean sea level (AMSL), as set forth in *Map My County* and Google Earth.

The Project will be developed in the eastern flatter portions of the site and include both short- and long-term erosion control measures, including landscaping, to assure there will not be

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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uncontrolled runoff and erosion from the site, both during construction and Project operation. These improvements will serve to stabilize the environment.

Based on this information, the Project would not 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. Any impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

- e) *Would the Project expose people or structures either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?*

**Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated**

The entire Project site is located within an SRA and a very high fire hazard area.

The proposed Project will be reviewed by the County as part of the discretionary process, and conditions of approval will be placed on the proposed Project to address any potential impacts to Fire Resources, consistent with the Fire Hazards section of the Safety Element of the General Plan, and Ordinance No. 787.

As part of the Project approval(s), standard conditions are assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to fire services. Prior to grading permit issuance, prior to building permit issuance, and prior to building final inspection the Project will need to demonstrate compliance with Ordinance No. 787. Adherence to Ordinance No. 787 is typically a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

Another standard condition assessed on the proposed Project to reduce impacts from the proposed Project to fire services is Ordinance No. 659. Applicant payment of DIF for expanded non-residential uses for fire protection will be required prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. It is noted that the proposed Project plan will not require any offsite improvements which could create demand for fire services.

The Project applicant shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance No. 659, which requires payment of the appropriate DIF fees set forth in the Ordinance. Adherence to Ordinance No. 659 is typically a standard condition of approval and is not considered unique mitigation pursuant to CEQA.

Although there are a number of standard conditions that address fire risk, the location of and access to the site plus the nature of the proposed Project are such that **Mitigation Measure** is recommended to assure that Project occupants will not be at a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

With implementation of standard conditions of approval, fire protection regulatory compliance, and **Mitigation Measure MM-FIRE-1**, the Project would not expose people or structures either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Any impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation.

**Mitigation:**

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**MM-FIRE-1 Fire Protection Plan.** Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall demonstrate the facility has implemented all recommendations of the *Fire Protection Plan (FPP)* prepared for the Project by Firewise 2000, LLC dated 6-12-2023 or subsequent County-approved version. The *FPP* includes but is not limited to the creation of four onsite Fuel Treatment Zones for fuel management, a shelter in place plan for guests and employees if necessary, during a wildfire event, non-treatment areas, construction material restrictions, and water system requirements. The *FPP* shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the County Fire Marshal.

**Monitoring:** To be monitored through the Certificate of Occupancy Permit Process and site inspections by Riverside County Building and Safety Department and the County Fire Marshal shall be included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project to assure its implementation.

**MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE** Does the Project:

<b>45.</b> 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 a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Source(s):** Staff Review; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

Implementation of the proposed Project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

Please reference the discussions in Section 7 (Biological Resources – Wildlife & Vegetation), Section 8 and 9 (Cultural Resources – Historic Resources and Archaeological Resources), Section 28 (Paleontological Resources – Paleontological Resources), and Section 39 (Tribal Cultural Resources). In addition to the mitigation outlined below, standard conditions will apply to the proposed Project. Any impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated (see below).

***Biological Resources***

- MM-BIO-1** Deed Restricted Areas
- MM-BIO-2** Signage
- MM-BIO-3** Biological Monitor
- MM-BIO-4** Chaparral Sand-Verbena Protection
- MM-BIO-5** Nesting Bird Survey

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>46.</b> Have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects and probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Staff Review; Sections 1-44; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

***Less Than Significant Impact***

The Project does not have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. As demonstrated in Sections 1 – 44 of this Environmental Assessment, in particular regarding air quality and greenhouse gas emissions that have established thresholds to consider cumulative impacts as well as hydrology and traffic impacts that consider the existing and currently planned development of the area and the specific respective drainage and traffic impacts to the overall area in a cumulative manner. As illustrated in the EA, the Project will not have any impacts that cannot be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation, Project design features, and/or conditions of approval. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated to occur. The impacts of the proposed Project are not considerable when viewed in connection with those of other projects (past, current, or future) as most properties in this area are agriculture, forest/habitat, rural, recreation, open space, or vacant land. Any impacts are considered less than significant with implementation of standard conditions of approval and mitigation for impacts to biological and cultural resources.

<b>47.</b> Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Source(s):** Staff Review; Sections 1-44; and Project Plans (**Appendix K**).

**Findings of Fact:**

***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated***

Effects on human beings were evaluated as part of this analysis of this Initial Study and found to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures, standard conditions, and/or Project design features in aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology & water quality, noise, public services, and transportation. Based on the analysis and conclusions in this Initial Study, the proposed Project will not cause substantial adverse effects directly or indirectly to human beings. Mitigation was recommended for impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions and hazards (see below), and a number of standard conditions of approval were added for noise impacts.

Therefore, potential direct and indirect impacts on human beings that result from the proposed Project are considered less than significant with regulatory compliance, standard conditions, and mitigation incorporated (see below).

***Hazards/Public Services-Fire/ Wildfire***

**MM-FIRE-1** Fire Protection Plan

## VI. EARLIER ANALYSES

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 as per California Code of Regulations, Section 15063 (c) (3) (D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

Earlier Analyses Used, if any: N/A

Location Where Earlier Analyses, if used, are available for review:

Location: County of Riverside Planning Department  
4080 Lemon Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Riverside, CA 92505

## VII. AUTHORITIES CITED

Authorities cited: Public Resources Code – various Sections; California Code of Regulations – various Sections.

## VII. SOURCES CITED

*Note: All websites were accessed between February and December of 2022 by MFCS, Inc. Staff.*

AirNav.com  
<https://www.airnav.com/>

Anza Electric Co-Op  
<https://www.anzaelectric.org/>

Assembly Bill 52  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140AB52](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB52)

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California Building Code  
<https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-building-code-2022>

California Code of Regulations  
<https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Index?transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>

California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program  
<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fire and Resource Assessment Program  
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/frap>

CalRecycle, SWIS Facility Detail, El Sobrante Landfill, 33-AA-0217  
[https://www.wmsolutions.com/pdf/factsheet/El\\_Sobrante\\_Landfill.pdf](https://www.wmsolutions.com/pdf/factsheet/El_Sobrante_Landfill.pdf)

CalRecycle website  
<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/>



California Geological Survey  
[www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs)

California State Mining and Geology Board  
[www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb)

County of Riverside, Climate Action Plan Update, November 2019  
[https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/CAP/2019/2019\\_CAP\\_Update\\_Full.pdf](https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/CAP/2019/2019_CAP_Update_Full.pdf)

El Sobrante Landfill Annual Monitoring Report  
<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory/33-AA-0217>

El Sobrante Landfill Fact Sheet, issued by Waste Management of California  
<https://www.wmsolutions.com/locations/details/id/180>

EnviroStor Department of Toxic Substances Control's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List)  
<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov>

FEMA  
<https://msc.fema.gov>

Geological Survey (CGS)  
<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs>

GeoTracker  
<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>

Google Earth  
[www.google.com/earth](http://www.google.com/earth)

Google Maps  
<https://maps.google.com>

Hemet Unified School District  
<https://www.hemetusd.org/>

mindat.org website  
<https://www.mindat.org/loc-3522.html>

Mountain Communities Evacuation Routes Map;  
<http://rvweb.org/MASTPortal/Portals/0/EvacRoutes/WUIEvacRoutes.pdf>

Public Resources Code  
<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codesTOCSelected.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&tocTitle=+Public+Resources+Code+-+PRC>

Riverside County Department of Waste Resources (RCDWR), Planning Section and Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan  
<https://www.rcwaste.org/business/planning/ciwmp>

Riverside County Fire Department  
<https://www.rvcfire.org/>

Riverside County General Plan

<https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan>

Riverside County General Plan Environmental Impact Report

[https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general\\_plan\\_2015/DEIR%20521/DEIR%20No.%20521.pdf](https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_plan_2015/DEIR%20521/DEIR%20No.%20521.pdf)

Riverside County Library System

<http://rivlib.info/riverside-county-library-system/>

Riverside County Network of Care

<https://riverside.networkofcare.org/>

Riverside County Ordinances

<http://www.rivcocob.org/ordinances/>

Riverside County Sheriff's Department

[www.riversidesheriff.org](http://www.riversidesheriff.org)

Title 24 building requirements

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/building-energy-efficiency-standards>

Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2010-title50-vol2/CFR-2010-title50-vol2-sec17-11>

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey; *Soil Survey of Western Riverside Area, California*, prepared by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

United States Geological Service

<https://www.usgs.gov/>