IDYLLWILD WATER DISTRICT
CEQA Environmental Checklist & Environmental Assessment

Project Title:	Strawberry Creek Diversion Structure Rehabilitation and Pipeline Replacement Project
Lead agency name and address:	Idyllwild Water District 25945 Highway 243 P.O. Box 397 Idyllwild, CA 92549-0397
Contact persons and phone number:	John D. Criste, AICP Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. 42635 Melanie Place Palm Desert, CA 92211 (760) 341-4800
Project location: West of Tahquitz Road and within Fern Valley Road west of Tahquitz Road, south of and including a portion of Strawberry Creek, in the E1/2 of the NE1/4 of Section 7, Township 5 South, Ranch 3 East, SBB&M, and being within Idyllwild Mountain Park Co.'s Subdivision No. 7 of the County of Riverside.	
Project sponsor's name and address:	Idyllwild Water District 25945 Highway 243 P.O. Box 397 Idyllwild, CA 92549-0397 (951) 659-2143
General Plan Designation: MDR OS-W: Open Space- Water	**Zoning:** R-1A-9000 W-1 Water Ways

Idyllwild Water District

The Idyllwild Water District (IWD or District) has been providing water services to this mountain community for more than 50 years. IWD replenishes Foster Lake and its underground reservoir by capturing seasonal flows from Strawberry Creek and other sources of runoff and supplies its customers from its 28 wells. IWD also provides wastewater collection and treatment services. It is also an innovator in the use of renewable energy (solar) to power pumps and other equipment. The District's service area is about 2,500 acres with 30 miles of water lines and 10 miles of sewer lines serving over 1,600 customers, with almost one third receiving sewer service that helps to protect precious groundwater resources.

Description of Project

Existing Diversion System

For many years, the District has had an active, maintained in-stream diversion structure located within the Strawberry Creek streambed and approximately 25 feet downstream of the Tahquitz Road right of way. The existing diversion structure is approximately 8 feet x 15 feet and is hand-constructed consisting of native loose and in-situ boulders and cobble rock and hand-troweled mortar construction. Steel grate covers serve to screen out large debris, and a discharge pipeline conveys impounded water through 700 linear feet (LF) of 6-inch steel pipe. Approximately 440 LF of the existing pipeline runs above grade along Strawberry Creek and through the

back areas of private properties by spanning boulders, laying on the ground surface, or with minimal cover. The remaining portion of the pipeline is underground and traverses private property as it heads towards and connects to a pipeline in Fern Valley Road, which in turn connects to a storage reservoir on District owned property on APN 563-162-014. (See Exhibit 5: Photos of Project Site)

Proposed Diversion Structure

The proposed diversion structure will replace the existing diversion structure, will be within the already disturbed area of the creek and will be the same size or slightly smaller than the existing structure. The new diversion structure will be approximately 8 feet by 12 feet and will be constructed of a mix of cast-in-place concrete, concrete block, and some prefabricated concrete and metallic elements (depending on its final configuration) and in-situ rock. An inclined trash rack to intercept foreign material will be installed 8± feet upstream of the diversion structure and will be 8± feet in width. The overall impact area within the creek boundary will not exceed 900 square feet (SF; 30' x 30'), and actual disturbance footprint is expected to be limited to 500± square feet (20' x 25'). As with the current condition, the streambed approach to the diversions structure will be lined hand-troweled concrete. The diversion structure will be fitted with an 8-inch outlet that will connect to an 8-inch or 12-inch PVC or ductile iron pipeline that will run south of the diversion structure and parallel to Tahquitz Road. (See discussion below and Exhibits 4a & 4b: Plans and Profile)

Diversion Pipeline – Reach 1 (Vacant Property)

Exiting the new diversion structure, Reach 1 of the proposed pipeline will consist of 245± linear feet (LF) of 8-inch PVC or ductile iron pipe that will be located 5 to 9 feet underground within an irregular easement alignment on private property (APN 563-152-008) 15 to 44 feet from the existing Tahquitz Road RW and designed to avoid trees and other areas of major vegetation. The easement area is characterized by relatively undisturbed land, with a variety of trees of different sizes common to the Idyllwild area. Westerly and adjacent to the pipeline easement is a 20' wide temporary construction easement adjacent to the existing Tahquitz Road RW, which will minimize temporary construction impacts associated with construction equipment and storage of materials during the construction phase. A large portion of the Reach 1 alignment has previously been cleared of trees and has been in use as a parking area by existing and past owners of the property.

Diversion Pipeline – Reach 2 (Fern Valley Road)

Reach 2 of the proposed pipeline will consist of 300± LF of 8-inch PVC or ductile iron pipe located underground within the existing 50' wide Riverside County Right-of-Way of Fern Valley Road and approximately 10' southerly of the centerline of Fern Valley Road. It will continue southerly on the edge of the existing 25'-30' wide paved roadway and reconnect to the 6-inch steel pipeline feeding District's storage reservoir. The entirety of the Reach 2 pipeline will occur within the Fern Valley Road RW and the District-owned reservoir site (APN 563-162-014) at a depth of approximately 5 to 8 feet.

Decommissioning of Existing Pipeline

Upon completion of the new Diversion System (structure and pipeline), the existing above-ground 6-inch steel pipeline running along Strawberry Creek and to District's property will be permanently decommissioned and taken out of service. Those portions that are at or above ground will be manually severed into manageable lengths and removed by hand from their current location. Those portions that are that are underground will be abandoned in-place by capping, plugging or filling with a cement type slurry to render inoperable. Any impacts will minimal and limited to the location of the existing pipeline, and with little to no new disturbance.

Project Objectives and Scope

The Strawberry Creek Diversion Structure Rehabilitation and Pipeline Replacement Project is an urgently needed infrastructure rehabilitation project needed to ensure that the customers of the IWD continue to have a safe and reliable source of drinking water. The subject diversion structure and pipeline are several decades old, have been repaired in the past but now require replacement. The diversion structure provides stream flow diversion while providing for ongoing downstream flows during both low and high flow periods in the creek.

Construction Access and Staging
The Project proposes a single staging area within the District's permanent easement on APN 563-152-008 along and adjacent to the existing Tahquitz Road, which will also provide primary access to the pipeline easement and work area. Access to the diversion structure will be from both the pipeline easement and directly from Tahquitz Road. No vehicular access into the streambed is planned, and materials for its rehabilitation will be brought in on foot and/or by hose or pipe extended from Tahquitz Road to affect any necessary rock removal and to convey concrete to forms for the diversion basin (see project plans).

Project Phasing
Project construction is expected to occur in one phase.

Surrounding Land Uses:
North: Strawberry Creek and Single-family residential neighborhoods
South: Fern Valley Road, Tahquitz Road and Single-family residential neighborhoods beyond
East: Tahquitz Road and Single-family residential neighborhoods
West: Single-family residential neighborhood and Strawberry Creek

Other public agencies whose approval is or may be required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)

Regional Water Quality Control Board
California Department of Fish & Wildlife

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency) On the basis of this initial evaluation:

	I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
✓	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

John D. Criste, AICP
District Planning Consultant

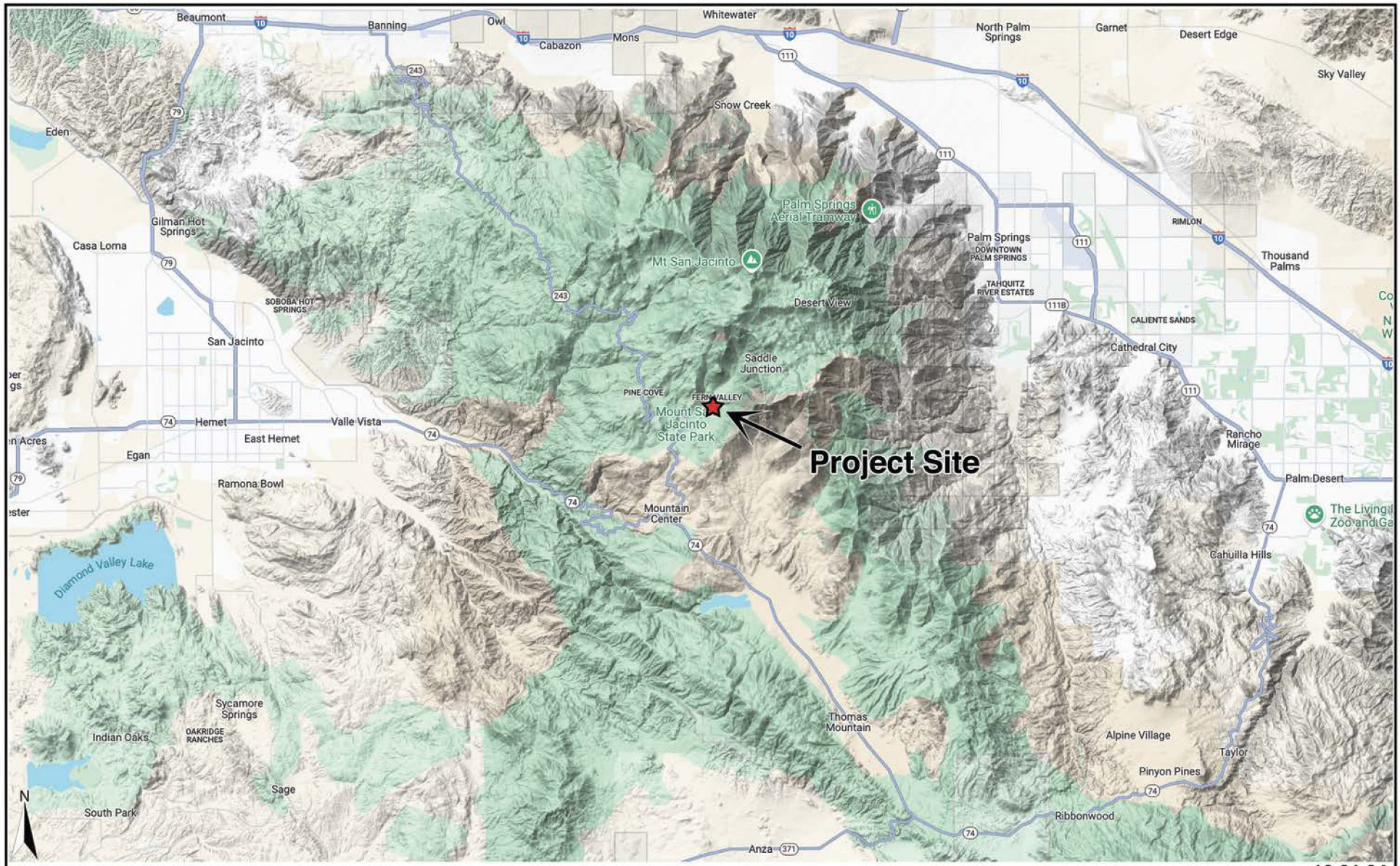
October 24, 2024
Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross referenced).
5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures, which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impacts to less than significance.



Source: Google Maps, 10.21.2024

10.21.24

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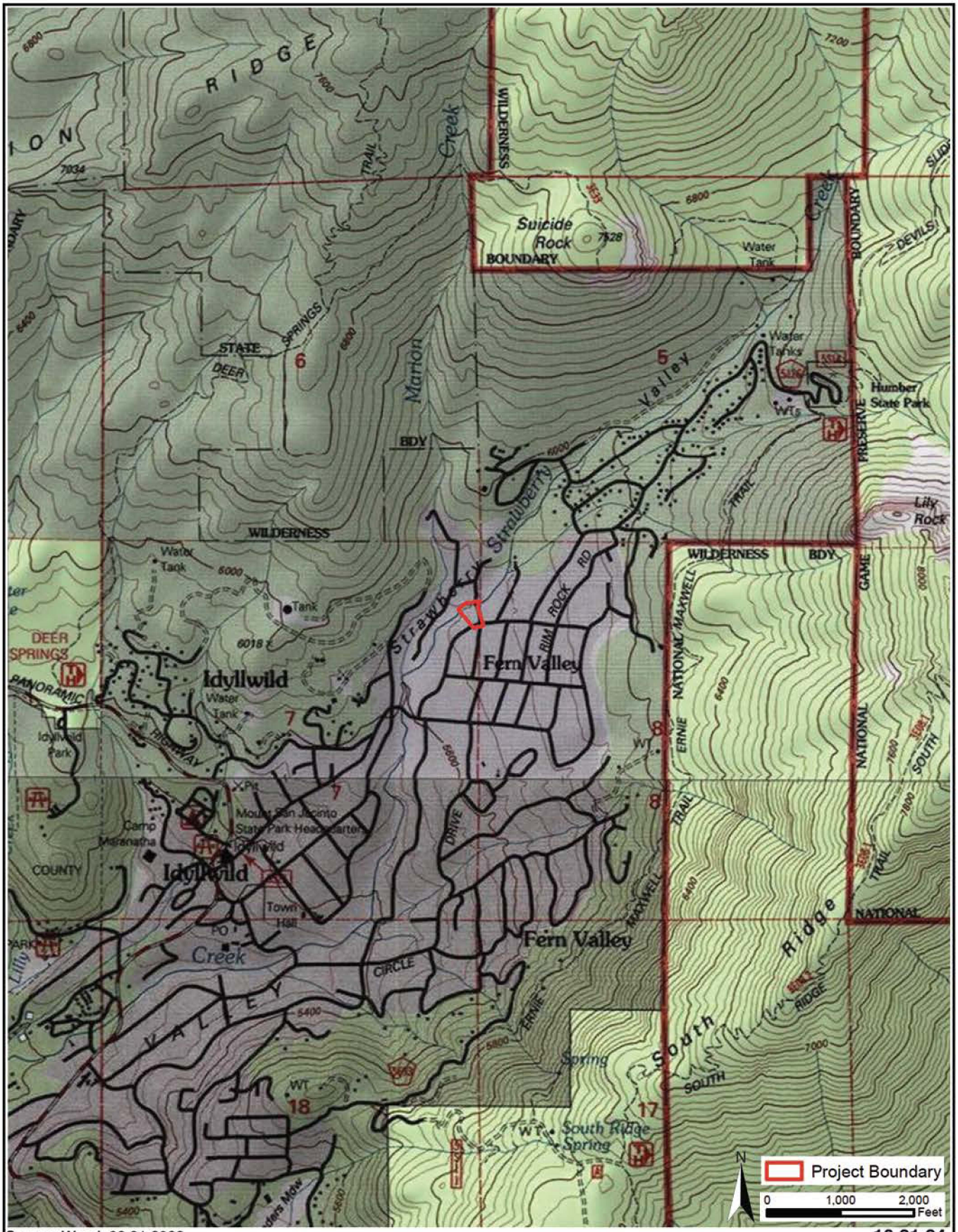
Regional Location Map
Strawberry Creek Diversion Rehabilitation Project
Idyllwild Water District
Idyllwild, California

Exhibit
1



Source: Wood, 08.31.2022

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Vicinity Map
Strawberry Creek Diversion Rehabilitation Project
Idyllwild Water District
Idyllwild, California

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Exhibit

2

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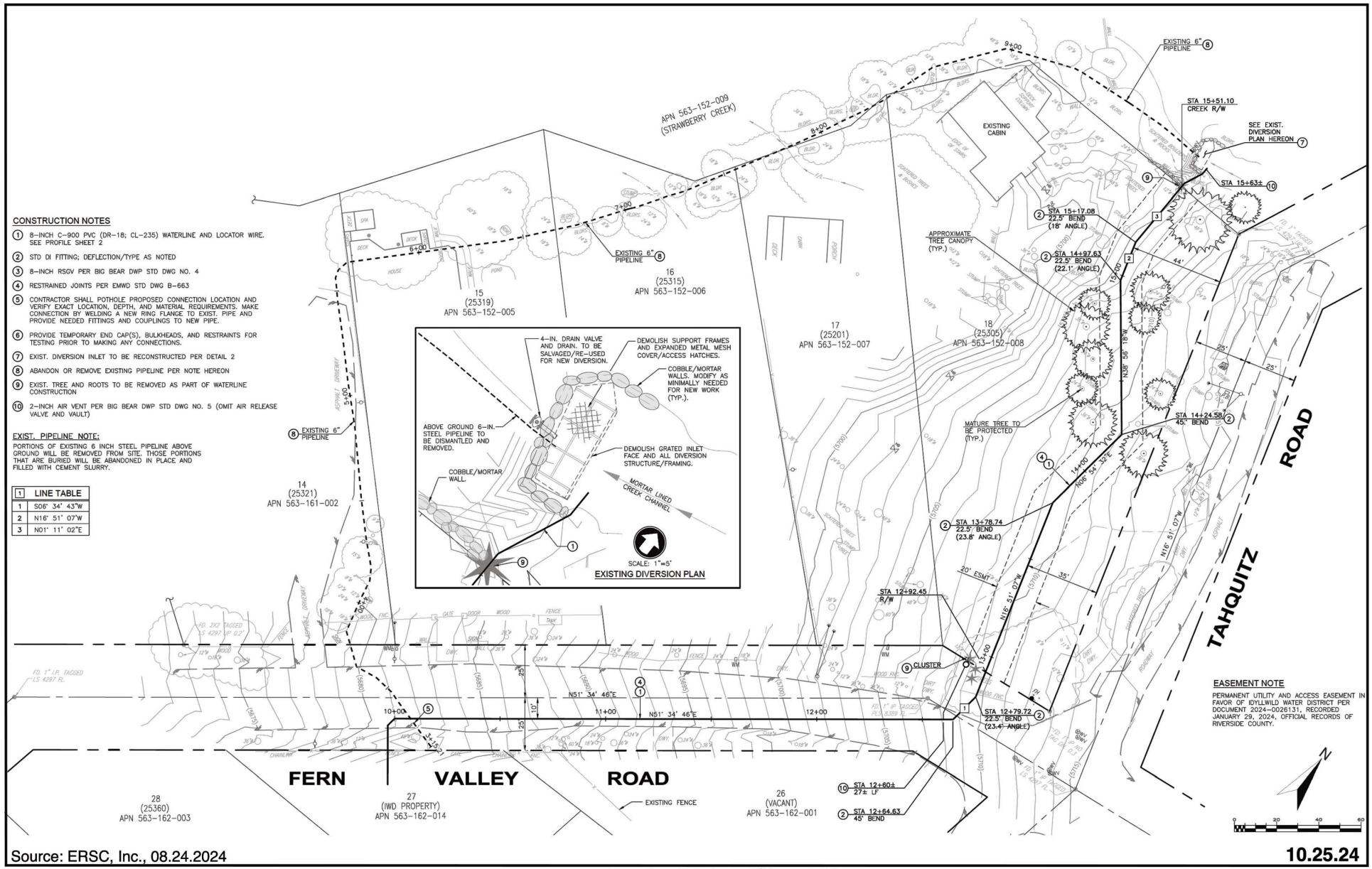
Project Site
Strawberry Creek Diversion Rehabilitation Project
Idyllwild Water District
Idyllwild, California

Exhibit
3



Source: ERSC, Inc., 08.24.2024

10.25.24

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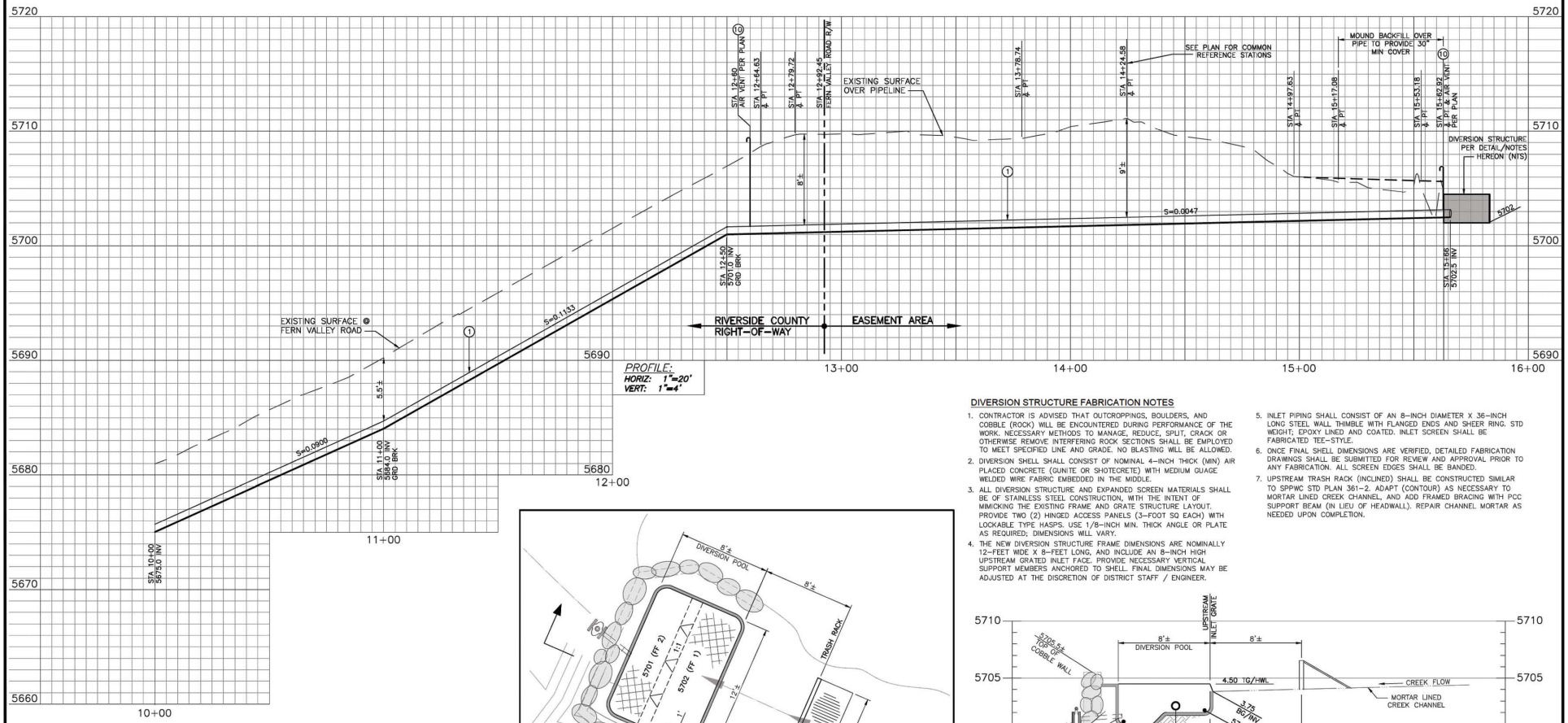
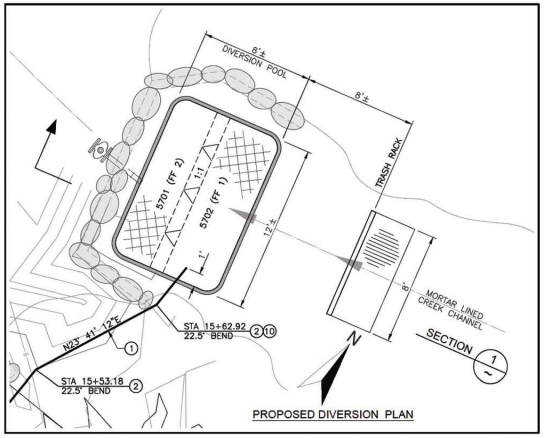
Project Plan (Sheet 1)
Strawberry Creek Diversion Rehabilitation Project
Idyllwild Water District
Idyllwild, California

Exhibit

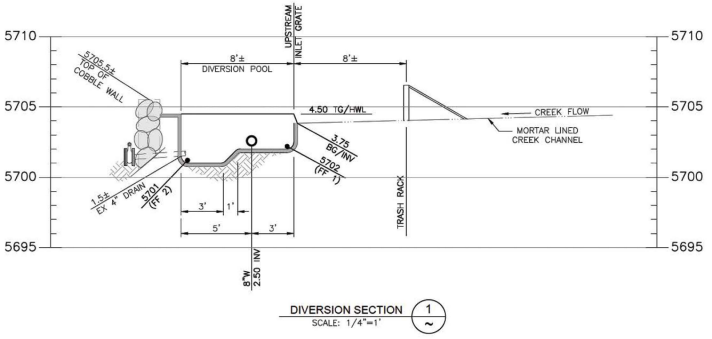
4a





DIVERSION STRUCTURE FABRICATION NOTES

1. CONTRACTOR IS ADVISED THAT OUTCROPPINGS, BOULDERS, AND COBBLE (ROCK) WILL BE ENCOUNTERED DURING PERFORMANCE OF THE WORK. NECESSARY METHODS TO MANAGE, REDUCE, SPLIT, CRACK OR OTHERWISE REMOVE INTERFERING ROCK SECTIONS SHALL BE EMPLOYED TO MEET SPECIFIED LINE AND GRADE. NO BLASTING WILL BE ALLOWED.
2. DIVERSION SHELL SHALL CONSIST OF NOMINAL 4-INCH THICK (MIN) AIR PLACED CONCRETE (GUNITE OR SHOTECRETE) WITH MEDIUM GUAGE WELDED WIRE FABRIC EMBEDDED IN THE MIDDLE.
3. ALL DIVERSION STRUCTURE AND EXPANDED SCREEN MATERIALS SHALL BE OF STAINLESS STEEL CONSTRUCTION, WITH THE INTENT OF MIMICKING THE EXISTING FRAME AND GRATE STRUCTURE LAYOUT. PROVIDE TWO (2) HINGED ACCESS PANELS (3-FOOT SQ EACH) WITH LOCKABLE TYPE HASPS. USE 1/8-INCH MIN. THICK ANGLE OR PLATE AS REQUIRED; DIMENSIONS WILL VARY.
4. THE NEW DIVERSION STRUCTURE FRAME DIMENSIONS ARE NOMINALLY 12-FEET WIDE X 8-FEET LONG, AND INCLUDE AN 8-INCH HIGH UPSTREAM GRATED INLET FACE. PROVIDE NECESSARY VERTICAL SUPPORT MEMBERS ANCHORED TO SHELL. FINAL DIMENSIONS MAY BE ADJUSTED AT THE DISCRETION OF DISTRICT STAFF / ENGINEER.
5. INLET PIPING SHALL CONSIST OF AN 8-INCH DIAMETER X 36-INCH LONG STEEL WALL THIMBLE WITH FLANGED ENDS AND SHEER RING. STD WEIGHT; EPOXY LINED AND COATED. INLET SCREEN SHALL BE FABRICATED TEE-STYLE.
6. ONCE FINAL SHELL DIMENSIONS ARE VERIFIED, DETAILED FABRICATION DRAWINGS SHALL BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL PRIOR TO ANY FABRICATION. ALL SCREEN EDGES SHALL BE BANDED.
7. UPSTREAM TRASH RACK (INCLINED) SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED SIMILAR TO SPPWC STD PLAN 361-2. ADAPT (CONTOUR) AS NECESSARY TO MORTAR LINED CREEK CHANNEL, AND ADD FRAMED BRACING WITH PCC SUPPORT BEAM (IN LIEU OF HEADWALL). REPAIR CHANNEL MORTAR AS NEEDED UPON COMPLETION.



DIVERSION SECTION 1
SCALE: 1/4"=1'

Source: ERSC, Inc., 08.24.2024

10.25.24

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Project Plan (Sheet 2)
Strawberry Creek Diversion Rehabilitation Project
Idyllwild Water District
Idyllwild, California

Exhibit
4b

Exhibit 5: Photos of Project Site

Photo 1. View from the bridge at Tahquitz Road looking downstream.

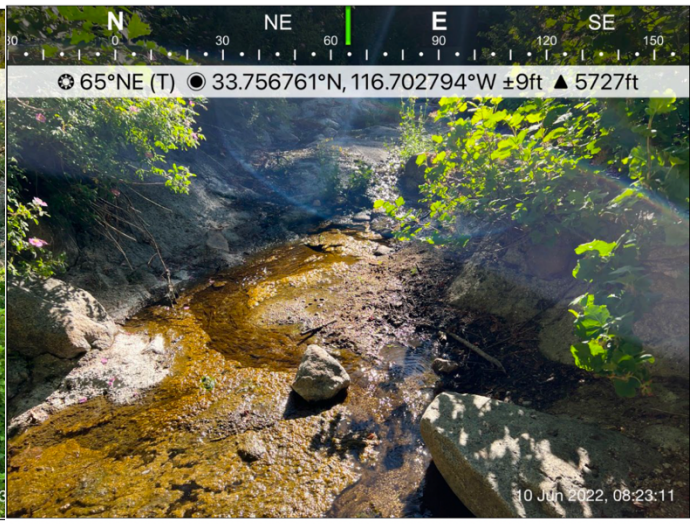

Photo 2. View within the creek showing the grouted bottom and very shallow pools.

Photo 3. View of the water diversion structure.

Photo 4. View of the water diversion structure and existing pipeline.

Photo 5. View of pipeline easement adjacent to the stream

Photo 6. View of the disturbed area within the project site.

I. AESTHETICS **Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			✓	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			✓	
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			✓	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				✓

Sources: Riverside County General Plan Update & Environmental Impact Report, 2015 (SCH 2009041065); https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa; RivCo Zoning Ord. 348, 2023; Project development plan, ERSC, 2024.

Setting

The Project site is located in the Fern Valley neighborhood of Idyllwild in a residential subdivision comprised of numerous homes and cabins in an heavily forested lands with limited sight distances except on and along the subject roadways. Views into the Project area are very limited and the subject diversion structure is not visible from Tahquitz Road bridge which crosses the upstream portion of Strawberry Creek. The proposed pipeline alignments is similarly obscured by existing vegetation, which is comprised of large and smaller cedar and other evergreen trees and shrubs. Portions of the pipeline alignment outside the road rights-of-way have been cleared and include areas of barren ground that is visible is a few areas from Tahquitz Road looking west into the alignment.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b, c) Less Than Significant Impact.

The proposed Project includes the reconstruction of the subject diversion structure, which is and will continue to appear as a continuation of the existing streambed. The existing and reconstructed structure will not be visible from any public view, including that afforded from Tahquitz Road. Portions of the existing pipeline are above ground and may be visible to some residents from their private properties. However, the proposed realignment of the existing diversion pipeline will be undergrounded beginning a short distance from the diversion structure. The pipeline alignment has been established in a manner that avoids major vegetation, passes through areas of existing disturbance and otherwise limits of disturbance that may be visible in the near-term from Tahquitz and Fern Valley Road. Once work is completed, the pipeline

alignment will be covered, returned to its current topographic relief and will naturally revegetate. There are no scenic vistas from either the diversion structure, the pipeline alignment or associated portions of Tahquitz and/or Fern Valley Roads. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas will be less than significant.

There are no scenic resources beyond the close-in heavily forested lands along Tahquitz and Fern Valley Road, neither of which afford views into the diversion structure. There are no visually important trees or other vegetation that will be affected, nor are the any rock outcroppings in the Project area. There are no historic buildings or other structures in the Project area. There are no scenic highways in the project vicinity, the nearest scenic highway being State Route 243 located approximately 0.8± miles to the southwest. State Route 74 is located 2.8 miles southwest of the project site. Impacts will be less than significant.

d) **No Impact.** The Project does not include any new lighting, although temporary on-site construction and staging area security lighting may be required during the construction phase. No subsequent permanent lighting is planned. Therefore, the Project will have no impacts associated with increased light and glare.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				✓
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓

Sources: Riverside County General Plan Update & Environmental Impact Report, 2015 (SCH 2009041065); https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa; RivCo Zoning Ord. 348, 2023; Project development plan, ERSC, 2024; California Important Farmland Finder, California Department of Conservation, https://maps.conservation.ca.gov.DLRP/CIFF/ (accessed March 2023).

Setting

Agriculture makes up a significant portion of the economy in Riverside County but there are no designated agricultural lands in the Idyllwild community. The Fern Valley neighborhood where the project is planned is predominantly built out with existing homes, cabins and small mountain resorts, and does not contain any land designated or zoned for agricultural uses. There are also no Williamson Act contracted lands. Neither are there designated forestland within the Project area. California Government Code section 51104(g) defines a "Timberland production zone" (TPZ) as an area that has been zoned for the purpose of growing and harvesting timber, or for compatible uses. The term "compatible use" refers to any use that does not significantly detract from the property's use for timber production. Neither the General Plan nor the Zoning Ordinance include forestry or forest production designations.

Discussion of Impacts

a-e) **No Impact.** The Project proposes the reconstruction of an existing stream diversion structure and pipeline, which has been in place for several decades. The site is in a developed mountain residential area in the Fern Valley neighborhood of the community of Idyllwild. It is not on or in proximity to any farm or forest lands designated for harvest. There are also no Williamson Act contracted lands. Neither are there designated forestland within the Project area. California Government Code section 51104(g) defines a "Timberland production zone" (TPZ) as an area that has been zoned for the purpose of growing and harvesting timber, or for compatible uses. The term "compatible use" refers to any use that does not significantly detract from the property's use for timber production. Neither the General Plan nor the Zoning Ordinance include forestry or forest production designations.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

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

Sources: SCAQMD AQMP, 2022; "Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology," prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Revised, July 2008; "2003 Coachella Valley PM_{10} State Implementation Plan," August 1, 2003; CalEEMod Version 2022.1; Project materials.

Setting

The Project site is located in the Fern Valley neighborhood of Idyllwild, an unincorporated community of Riverside County approximately 45 miles west of Palm Springs in the San Jacinto Mountains. Riverside County extends across three air basins, including the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB), and the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). Idyllwild sits on the boundary of the SCAB and SSAB. The SCAB is described as including all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Idyllwild is within the non-desert portion of Riverside County; however, according to CalEEMod, the air emissions modeling software used in this analysis, the Project site is located within the SSAB. Specifically, the site may be located along the westernmost boundary of the "Coachella Valley region" of the SSAB. Because the air basins exact jurisdictional boundary is unclear, both air basins are considered for analysis purposes.

Both the SCAB and SSAB are under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). All development within the SCAB and SSAB is subject to the 2022 SCAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). For the Coachella Valley region of the SSAB, development is also subject to the 2003 Coachella Valley PM_{10} State Implementation Plan (CV PM_{10} SIP). SCAQMD operates and maintains regional air quality monitoring stations at numerous locations throughout its jurisdiction. The Project site is within Source Receptor Area (SRA) 30, which includes monitoring stations in Palm Springs, Indio, and Mecca.

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for major pollutants that could be detrimental to the environment and human health. The California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are the California equivalent of the NAAQS. An air basin is in "attainment" (compliance) when the levels of the pollutant in that air basin are below NAAQS and CAAQS thresholds. Criteria air pollutants of concern are contaminants for which state and federal air quality standards (as shown in Table 1) have been established. Currently, the Project is located in an area of the SCAB that exceeds federal and state standards for ozone and $PM_{2.5}$, and in an area of the SSAB that exceeds state

and federal standards for PM_{10} and ozone. The SCAB is considered a maintenance area for PM^{10}, meaning it was previously designated as a nonattainment area, but has since been redesignated as an attainment area.

Table 1
State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards	
		Concentrations[1]	Primary	Secondary
Ozone (O_3)	1 Hour	0.09 ppm	--	
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm	0.070 ppm	
Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	24 Hour	50 µg/m^3	150 µg/m^3	
	AAM[2]	20 µg/m^3	--	
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	24 Hour	--	35 µg/m^3	
	AAM	12 µg/m^3	9.0 µg/m^3	15 µg/m^3
Carbon Monoxide	1 Hour	20 ppm	35 ppm	--
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm	9 ppm	--
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	1 Hour	0.18 ppm	100 ppb	--
	AAM	0.030 ppm	53 ppb	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	1 Hour	0.25 ppm	75 ppb	--
	3 Hour	--	--	0.5 ppm
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm	0.14 ppm	--
	AAM	--	0.030 ppm	--
Lead	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m^3	--	--
	Calendar Quarter	--	1.5 µg/m^3	
	Rolling 3-Month Average	--	0.15 µg/m^3	
Visibility Reducing Particles	8 Hour	--	No National Standards	
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m^3		
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m^3)		
Vinyl Chloride	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m^3)		

[1] *µg/m^3 = micrograms per cubic* meter of air
[2] *AAM = Annual Arithmetic Mean*
Source: California Air Resources Board, Ambient Air Quality Standards (July 2024) *https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/AAQS%20Table_ADA_FINAL_07222024.pdf* (accessed October 2024)

The Project will emit criteria air pollutants during construction, and operational emissions would be limited to negligible emissions resulting from the off gassing of materials and potential minor and temporary maintenance activities. Emissions were projected using California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a Statewide land use emission computer model developed for the California Air Pollution Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with the California Air Districts, including the SCAQMD, that provides a uniform platform to quantify potential criteria pollutant and greenhouse emissions associated with construction and operation of land development projects. CalEEMod output tables are provided in Appendix A.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **No Impact**. Under CEQA, a significant air quality impact could occur if the project is not consistent with the applicable Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) or would obstruct the implementation of the policies or hinder reaching the goals of that plan. The Project is limited to the reconstruction of an existing stream diversion structure and replacement segment of underground pipeline and would not increase automobile capacity or create other permanent new sources of air pollutant emissions. Operations would be similar to existing conditions upon construction completion.

The Project is subject to SCAQMD's 2022 AQMP. The SCAQMD imposes air criteria emission thresholds for construction and operation that ensures the emissions levels remain within acceptable levels to remain consistent with their projected air pollutant emissions for future attainment. As mandated by the regional air quality district, the Project will adhere to all the standards and requirements outlined in the 2022 AQMP. As shown in Table 2, below, Project emissions would not exceed SCAQMD thresholds of significance. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of any air quality plan. Overall, construction of the proposed Project would not prevent SCAQMD from implementing actions set forth in the applicable air quality plans. There will be no impacts.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact**. A project is considered to have significant impacts if there is a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. As previously stated, the Project site is in an area currently in nonattainment for PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and ozone. Therefore, if the Project's construction and/or operational emissions exceed SCAQMD thresholds for PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and ozone precursors, which include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous oxides (NO_x), and volatile/reactive organic compounds/gases (VOC or ROG), then impacts would be cumulatively considerable and significant.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1 was used to project air pollutant emissions that will be generated by the proposed Project (Appendix A). The proposed Project would release criteria air pollutants during construction, from activities including grubbing, land clearing, grading, excavation, installation of pipelines, paving and material hauling. Once the proposed diversion structure reconstruction/rehabilitation and pipeline installation is complete, the Project would result in very limited pollutant emissions during operations and potential future maintenance.

<u>Construction Emissions</u>
For purposes of air quality analysis, construction associated with the proposed Project is expected to take approximately 2 months. Based on Project plans, construction would involve a disturbed area of 15,000± square feet (0.344 acres), including paving of 7,500± square feet of asphalt. According to preliminary grading, all earth materials excavated from the site would be balanced onsite. Material exported from the site include the removal of existing pipelines and concrete diversion structure debris. Materials imported to the site would include new pipelines, concrete and metal racks for the diversion structure, and 22 cubic yards (CY) of asphalt for 300 linear feet (LF) of roadway repaving.

Based on the above material import and export quantities, it is projected that 7 hauling trips (16 CY a haul load) of up to 20 miles in length would be required during construction. Assumptions regarding the equipment used across the various stages of construction are based on the default equipment types provided in CalEEMod. The Project's CalEEMod outputs are provided in Appendix A.

Based on these inputs, Table 2 shows the Project's maximum daily construction-related emissions.

Table 2
Maximum Daily Construction-Related Emissions Summary
(pounds per day)

Construction Emissions[1]	CO	NO_x	ROG	SO_x	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Daily Maximum	10.2	10.3	1.13	0.02	3.19	1.77
SCAQMD Thresholds	**550.00**	**100.00**	**75.00**	**150.00**	**150.00**	**55.00**
Exceeds?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

[1] PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ account for assumed adherence to required dust control measures.
Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1 (output tables provided in Appendix A).

As shown in the table above, SCAQMD daily thresholds for CO, NO_x, ROG, SO_x, PM_{10}, or $PM_{2.5}$ will not be exceeded during any phase of Project construction.

Operational Emissions
Operational emissions are ongoing emissions that would occur over the life of the Project. Operational emissions associated with the proposed Project would be de minimus and would be limited to negligible emissions resulting from the off gassing of materials and potential minor and temporary maintenance activities.

Cumulative Contribution
A significant impact could occur if the Project would make a considerable cumulative contribution to federal or state non-attainment pollutants. The SCAB is a designated non-attainment region for $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone, and the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is classified as a "non-attainment" area for PM_{10} and ozone. Cumulative air quality analysis is evaluated on a regional scale (rather than a neighborhood or city scale, for example), given the dispersing nature of pollutant emissions and aggregate impacts from surrounding jurisdictions and air management districts. Any development project or activity resulting in emissions of PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, ozone, or ozone precursors will contribute, to some degree, to regional non-attainment designations of ozone and PM_{10}.

The SCAQMD does not currently recommend quantified analyses of construction and/or operational emissions from multiple development projects, nor does it provide methodologies or thresholds of significance to be used to assess the significance of cumulative emissions generated by multiple cumulative projects. However, it is recommended that a project's potential contribution to cumulative impacts be assessed utilizing the same significance criteria as those for project-specific impacts. Furthermore, SCAQMD states that if an individual development project generates less than significant construction or operational emissions, then the project would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Basin is in nonattainment.

As shown in Table 2 above, Project-related PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, CO, NO_x, SO_x and ROG emissions are projected to be well below the SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, the proposed Project will result in incremental, but not cumulatively considerable impacts on regional $PM_{10,}$ $PM_{2.5}$, or ozone levels.

Summary
As shown above, construction of the Project will result in criteria emissions below the SCAQMD significance thresholds. As previously stated, any operational emissions associated with the Project would be nominal. Neither construction nor operational emissions would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Impacts related to construction and operation will be less than significant and are not cumulatively considerable.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) can be used to determine whether a project may generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts in relation to the nearest exposed sensitive receptors. Sensitive receptor land uses include, but are not limited to, schools, churches, residences, hospitals, day care facilities, and elderly care facilities. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project are single family residences, located in all directions within 25 meters of the Project site.

The use of LSTs is voluntary and designed for projects that are less than or equal to 5 acres. The maximum area of disturbance associated with the proposed Project is approximately 0.34 acres, and construction is expected to occur over the course of two months. Thresholds are provided for sites that are 1 acre, 2 acres and 5 acres. As such, the 1-acre look-up table is appropriate under the SCAQMD's methodology to screen for potential localized air quality impacts.[1]

The Mass Rate Look-Up tables for LST were used to determine if the Project would have the potential to generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts during construction. The LST for Source Receptors Area (SRA) 30 was used to determine LST emission thresholds.[2] The distance from the emission source and the maximum daily site disturbance also determines emissions thresholds. For analysis purposes, the worst-case scenario of a sensitive receptors being within 25 meters was used and is representative of the distance of the residential properties in the Project's vicinity. Table 3 shows the results of the LST analysis, based on the construction emissions projected in CalEEMod.

Table 3
Localized Significance Thresholds
25 Meters, 1 Acre (pounds per day)

	CO	**NO_x**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Construction Emissions	10.2	10.3	3.19	1.77
LST Threshold	878	132	4	3
Exceeds Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source of Emission Data: CalEEMod version 2022.1 (output tables provided in Appendix A).
Source of LST Threshold: LST Mass Rate Look-up Table, 25 meters, 1 acre, SCAQMD

As shown in the above table, construction emissions associated with the Project would not exceed the SCAQMD LST threshold for CO, NO_x, PM_{10}, or $PM_{2.5}$. Impacts to sensitive receptors will therefore be less than significant.

Health Impacts

As discussed above, under significance threshold (b), construction and operation of the proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

It is not scientifically possible to calculate the degree to which exposure to various levels of criteria pollutant emissions will impact an individual's health. There are several factors that make predicting a Project-specific numerical impact difficult:

- Not all individuals will be affected equally due to differing medical histories. Some may have medical pre-dispositions, and diet and exercise levels tend to vary across a population.
- Due to the dispersing nature of pollutants, it is difficult to locate and identify which group of individuals will be impacted, either directly or indirectly.

[1] South Coast Air Quality Management District, "Fact Sheet for Applying CalEEMod to Localized Significance Thresholds."

[2] SCAQMD Localized Significance Thresholds, SRA/City Table excel sheet. http://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/localized-significance-thresholds

- There are currently no approved methodologies or studies to base assumptions on, such as baseline health levels or emission level-to-health risk ratios.

Due to these limitations, the extent to which the Project poses a health risk is uncertain but unavoidable. However, construction of the proposed Project will result in limited and temporary criteria pollutant emissions below the SCAQMD thresholds, as shown in Table 2 and 3, and emissions during operation of the Project would be nominal. Emissions during construction or operation of the Project would not violate any air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation. Therefore, it is anticipated that the impacts and the health effects associated with the Project's criteria pollutant emissions will overall be less than significant.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** During buildout, the Project has the potential to result in short-term odors associated with excavation and grading, pouring of concrete and asphalt, and other construction activities. However, any such odors would be limited, short-term and quickly dispersed below detectable levels as distance from the construction site increases. Project buildout is estimated to occur over a two-month period, and construction odors would be generated across various time periods and locations throughout the site such that odors would not be concentrated in one area for an extended duration. During long-term operation, the proposed stream diversion structure and pipeline is not expected to generate any odors. Therefore, impacts from objectionable odors will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			✓	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?			✓	

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede use of native wildlife nursery sites?			✓	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓

Sources: Biological Resources Assessment & Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Compliance Report, Strawberry Creek Project, WSP USA Environment and Infrastructure, Inc., August 15, 2022, Updated October 17, 2024; Delineation of Jurisdictional Waters, Strawberry Creek Project, prepared by WSP USA, Inc. October 18, 2024; Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, September 2008, as amended; Idyllwild Mountain Park Co. Subdivision No. 7.

Setting

Field surveys were conducted on June 10, 2022 and September 7, 2024, and the biological resources assessment was prepared for the Project by Senior Wildlife Biologist, Dale Hameister, who also conducted a streambed jurisdictional delineation for the Project. (Appendix B). The community of Idyllwild and the Project site are located within a mountainous region of western Riverside County in the San Jacinto Mountains at an elevation of 5,730-5,716 feet above sea level. The Project area has been extensively subdivided and developed as residences, cabins and small mountain resorts, while maintaining the forested characteristics of the area. The extensive residential subdivision is comprised of parcels ranging from 0.50 acre to as small as 0.08 acres.

Project area soils occur within Strawberry Creek Soil mapping which indicates the soils are uniform with no indications of alkali soils, saline soils, or other unique soils characteristics. The Project site contains one soil mapping unit: Wind River-Oak Glen families association, 2 to 15 percent slopes. This soil type is not known to be specifically associated with any sensitive biological resources. The Project site includes a small portion of Strawberry Creek located west of Tahquitz Road where the existing diversion structure and associated grouted concrete stream segment is located.

<u>Vegetation</u>

The site surveys conducted for this Project area identified Ponderosa pine - Incense Cedar - Douglas fir forest and woodland (*Pinus ponderosa* - *Calocedrus decurrens* - *Pseudotsuga menziesii* Forest & Woodland Alliance). The developed areas include numerous cabins, and disturbed area with mostly bare soil. The project site does not contain Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), but it does meet the requirement for this vegetation community. Tree canopy species within the survey area include incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), yellow pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), and California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*).

Shrubs observed within the understory of the forest canopy include Eastwood's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*), sweet-shrub (*Calycanthus occidentalis*), mountain pink currant (*Ribes nevadense*), and mountain whitethorn (*Ceanothus cordulatus*). Understory grasses and herbaceous species include California mugwort (Artemisia douglasiana), feverfew (Tanacetum parthenium), imbricate phacelia *(Phacelia imbricata*), silver bird's-foot trefoil (*Acmispon argophyllus*), broad leaved lotus (*Hosackia crassifolia*), broad-leaved lupine (*Lupinus latifolius*), San Jacinto buckwheat (*Eriogonum apiculatum*), Grinnell's beard tongue (*Penstemon grinnellii*), plain mariposa lily (*Calochortus invenustus*), and squirrel tail grass (*Elymus elymoides*).

Vegetation within the creek area was observed on the banks and among boulders and at the edges of the grouted creek bottom and existing diversion structure. Species observed within Strawberry Creek include cobwebby hedge nettle (*Stachys albens*), cardinal monkey flower (*Erythranthe cardinalis*), yellow monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*), and sturdy sedge (*Carex alma*). One single narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*) shrub was observed near the bridge at Tahquitz Road but is outside of the work area.

The Project site contains no MSHCP-covered native vegetation communities/land cover categories. The Project site is described as Ponderosa pine - Incense Cedar - Douglas fir forest and woodland (*Pinus ponderosa* - *Calocedrus decurrens* - *Pseudotsuga menziesii* Forest & Woodland Alliance), developed, and disturbed areas Disturbed/developed area are also present consisting of disrobed bare soil, existing single-family homes, vacation cabins, small mountain resorts, a variety of outbuildings and the paved roadways. The Project site contains no MSHCP-covered native vegetation communities/land cover categories.

Wildlife

Representative vertebrate species observed in the project site included but were not limited to acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), white-headed woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*).

Western Riverside County MSHCP

The Project site occurs within the boundaries of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), a comprehensive regional plan consisting of a reserve system of approximately 500,000 acres (the "conservation area") and includes a mechanism to fund and implement the reserve system. Approximately 347,000 acres of the reserve system are currently within public ownership (such as Public-Quasi Public Conserved Lands [PQP] and Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority [RCA] Conserved Lands) and 153,000 acres are currently in private ownership (mostly in Criteria Areas that have not yet been added to the conservation area). This 500,000-acre reserve system throughout the west County area is designed to compensate for impacts to these sensitive species from development projects throughout the plan area. As noted above, the Project site contains no covered native vegetation communities/land cover categories and no part of the Project site lies within or adjacent to any MSHCP Criteria Cells or Cell Groups. Therefore, the Project will have no effect on the assembly of the MSHCP reserve.

Special Status Species

As noted above, the Project site lies within the boundary of the West County MSHCP. The Project site contains no sensitive native vegetation communities or land cover categories that are covered by the plan. The site includes disturbed/developed areas consisting of disrobed bare soil, existing homes and cabins, and paved roadways. No Johnston's rock cress (*Boechera)* species were observed on-site and there are no records of Johnston's rock cress within the Idyllwild/Pine Cover area. All records for Johnston's rock cress are located near Garner Valley and Thomas Mountain approximately 7 miles to the south. No Munz's mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri* var. *munzii*) were observed on-site. There were several blooming plain mariposa lilies observed on-site, showing that the timing of the survey and moisture content of the soil were suitable for *Calochortus* species to be blooming. As noted, Munz's mariposa lily is more commonly found in grasslands, and most sightings are centered around Garner Valley and Thomas Mountain approximately 7 miles to the south.

No San Jacinto Mtns. Bedstraw were observed on-site. Although suitable habitat for this species occurs on-site; the closest known locations are records of the species approximately 2.4 miles to the west. No bedstraw species (*Gallium angustifolium* ssp. *jacinticum*) were observed.

The West County MSHCP Information Tool indicates that the Project site is within a MSHCP designated amphibian survey area for mountain yellow legged frog (*Rana muscosa*). It inhabits lakes, ponds, meadow streams, isolated pools, sunny riverbanks in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. In the mountains of southern California, this species inhabits rocky streams in narrow canyons and in the chaparral belt. The MSHCP indicates:

> *"...frequents streams that range from rocky, steep drainages to those with a gentle gradient, marshy margins, and sod banks. Large clear pools up to three feet deep are especially favored." (Stebbins & McGinnis 2012).*

Breeding habitat requires large clear pools for the development of larvae. The Project site's creek area includes small areas of pooled water 1-3 inches deep. The area of the creek where the existing diversion structure is located and where its repair and reconstruction will occur is also grouted without a lot of vegetative cover and does not provide suitable habitat for mountain yellow-legged frogs. The closest know population occurs approximately 4.9 miles to the northwest within Dark Canyon (CNDDB). Due to the lack of suitable breeding habitat and the disturbed and grouted nature of the stretch of the creek within the Project area, the project biologists concluded additional surveys for mountain yellow-legged frog are not recommended.

Other Sensitive Species

The MSHCP Information Tool indicates that the project site is not within a MSHCP-designated mammal survey area. It was also determined that the Project site does not fall within an area with mapped Delhi soils and is outside of the range of the Delhi Sands flower loving fly (*Rhaphiomidas terminatus abdominalis*). No other sensitive species with the potential to occur in the area were identified.

Nesting Birds Protection

The West County MSHCP does not provide take for impacts to nesting birds. The Project site contains suitable nesting habitat for several ground-nesting bird species protected under state code and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These include most native bird species. Impacts to nesting birds, both direct and indirect, can be minimized or eliminated during project activities by conducting work outside of the breeding season. Although nesting can occur year-round in southern California for some species, the typical avian breeding season is from approximately February 1 through August 31, especially at the higher elevations that characterize the Project site. It is recommended that, if possible, initial site clearing and grubbing work should be scheduled between September 1 and January 31 to avoid nesting activity. If site disturbance must be done during the nesting season, the Project site and adjacent areas should be surveyed by a qualified biologist prior to disturbance, especially where there could be any direct impacts. If active nests are found, the nests should be avoided and a "no disturbance" buffer zone established and observed until young have fledged. Mitigation for potential impacts to nesting birds is provided below.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **Less than Significant with Mitigation.** Two site surveys and comprehensive resource assessments were conducted on the Project site and adjoining lands. The assessment identified common and sensitive resources occurring or potentially occurring, their current conservation status and habitat associations. No species listed as state or federal listed as threatened or endangered were observed on the site or vicinity, nor are any listed species expected to occur there. The Project site is a narrow, linear feature surrounded by residential development, paved roads and forest.

The local neighborhood streets, Tahquitz Road and Fern Valley Road, bound the Project site on the east and south respectively and carry relatively low to moderate traffic volumes. Lands beyond the Project area are comprised of single-family homes, vacation cabins and small mountain resorts. As noted in the above Setting discussion, no species listed as state or federal listed as threatened or endangered, nor species covered by the West County MSHCP, were observed on the site or vicinity nor are listed species expected to occur there.

While the Project has limited potential to harbor or provide habitat for sensitive species, based on the site and resource assessment, the Project will not impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special status species. Potential impacts to nesting birds will be further reduced by application of mitigation measure BIO-1, below with regard to adherence to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and requirements for pre-construction nesting bird surveys.

b, c) **Less Than Significant Impacts.** The vegetation community on the subject site is identified as Ponderosa pine - Incense Cedar - Douglas fir forest and woodland (*Pinus ponderosa* - *Calocedrus decurrens* - *Pseudotsuga menziesii* Forest & Woodland Alliance), developed, and disturbed areas consisting of disrobed bare soil, existed homes, cabins and outbuildings, and the paved roadways. The Project site contains no MSHCP-covered native vegetation communities/land cover categories and no part of the Project site lies within or adjacent to any MSHCP Criteria Cells or Cell Groups. As noted in the Project biological survey report, a portion of the site is located in a riverine habitat associated with the creek bed; however, the Project will not result in any new impact to the creek bed. Therefore, the Project will not result in significant impacts to a sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service. Impacts will be less then significant.

Also, based upon the location and ephemeral nature of the subject and downstream drainages, the Project will not impact federally protected wetlands such as marshes, vernal pools, or coastal waters through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. The Project also will not generate any new impacts to the existing creek bed and will be limited to reconstructing/rehabilitating existing diversion facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.

d) **Less than Significant With Mitigation.** The Project site and all lands surrounding the Project site are developed with single-family homes, seasonal cabins and small mountain resorts. The Project area is also crossed by numerous roads that serve surrounding development and are a substantial barrier to wildlife movement. Strawberry Creek is a small, narrow, ephemeral drainage that provides limited opportunity for wildlife movement being closely bounded by residential development. No wildlife corridors or biological linkages are mapped, known, or expected on the Project site. Although it is used by several common species and may provide marginal habitat for migratory birds, the Project site is not identified as a nursery site. As described above, the site may offer limited nesting sites for birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Compliance with the MBTA, provided in Mitigation Measure BIO-1, will ensure impacts to sensitive species are reduced to less than significant levels.

e) **No Impact.** The proposed Project will not conflict with any local ordinances protecting biological species. The Project site does not lie within or in proximity of any MSHCP Criteria Cells or Cell Groups as designated by the West County MSHCP. The Project will not conflict with the goals and objectives of the MSHCP or any other local policy or ordinance protecting biological resources.

f) **No Impact.** The subject property is within the boundaries of the Western County MSHCP. The Project site is not located within or adjacent to any of the any MSHCP Criteria Cells or Cell Groups, Cores or Linkages established by the MSHCP. There are no sensitive species potentially occurring on-site, which were not adequately conserved at the time of MSHCP implementation. The Project diversion structure was constructed several decades ago and is an in-situ reconstruction/rehabilitation improvement project. Therefore, mitigation for impacts to MSHCP resources may include but would be limited to payment of the

standard MSHCP fee. No additional surveys or conservation measures are required. A Determination of Biological Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report will not be required. The Project will not conflict with this or any other habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures:

BIO-1 Migratory Bird Treaty Act
If ground disturbance or tree or plant removal is proposed between February 1st and August 31st, a qualified avian biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey within three (3) days of initiation of grading onsite, focusing on MBTA covered species. Surveys shall focus on both direct and indirect evidence of nesting, including nest locations and nesting behavior. The qualified avian biologists will make every effort to avoid potential nest predation as a result of survey and monitoring efforts. If active nests are reported, then species-specific measures shall be prepared. At a minimum, grading in the vicinity of a nest shall be postponed until the young birds have fledged. For construction that occurs between September 1st and January 31st, no pre-construction nesting bird survey is required. In the event active nests are found, exclusionary fencing shall be placed around the nests until such time as nestlings have fledged. Avoidance buffers shall be 100 to 300 feet from the nests of unlisted songbirds, and 500 feet from the nests of birds-of-prey and listed species. If nests are detected, a smaller or larger buffer may be determined by the qualified avian biologist.

Monitoring and Reporting:

BIO-A If a nesting bird survey is required, the Project biologist shall provide the District with a letter report of findings regarding the occurrence of nesting birds and any prescribed exclusionary fencing and monitoring. The report shall be attached to the grading permit for the Project.
Responsible Parties: Project Biologist, District Project Manager
Schedule: If required, prior to issuance of any permits that result in ground disturbance

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

Sources: Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report for Strawberry Creek Diversion Pipeline Project, prepared by CRM Tech, October 25, 2024; Riverside County General Plan Update & Environmental Impact Report, 2015 (SCH 2009041065); "The Cahuilla," Lowell John Bean and Lisa Bourgealt, Chelsea House Publishers, 1969.

Setting
For CEQA purposes, "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 Section 15064.5(a)(1)-(3)). 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 Section 15064.5(a)(3)). A resource may be listed in the California Register if it meets any of the following criteria:

a) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
b) Is associated with the lives of persons important in the State's past.
c) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
d) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (Public Resources Code section 5024.1(c))

Native American Occupation
As noted above, the community of Idyllwild and the Project site are located within a mountainous region of western Riverside County in the San Jacinto Mountains at an elevation of 5,730-5,716 feet above sea level. The Project area has been extensively subdivided and developed as residences, cabins and small mountain resorts, while maintaining the forested characteristics of the area. The extensive residential subdivision is comprised of parcels ranging from 0.50 acre to as small as 0.08 acres. Project area soils are uniform and contained within one soil mapping unit: Wind River-Oak Glen families association, 2 to 15 percent slopes. The Project site includes a small portion of Strawberry Creek located west of Tahquitz Road where the existing diversion structure and associated grouted concrete stream segment is located.

The earliest evidence of human occupation in western Riverside County and dating from the late Paleoindian (ca. 18000-9,000 B.P.) to the early Archaic Period (9,000-1,500 B.P.) was discovered to the west in the San Jacinto Valley, dating from around 9,500 before present day (B.P.). Other ancient sites include the shoreline of Lake Elsinore and dating between 8,000 and 9,000 B.P. Additional sites with isolated Archaic dart points, bifaces, and other associated lithic artifacts from the same age range have been found in the nearby Cajon Pass area of San Bernardino County, typically atop knolls with good viewsheds.

The Cahuilla
The San Jacinto Mountains, as well as lands to the north and east, including the Coachella Valley, are a part of the traditional territory of the Cahuilla people. The Takic-speaking Cahuilla are generally divided by anthropologists into three groups, according to their geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the San Gorgonio Pass-Palm Springs area, the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and the Cahuilla Valley, and the Desert Cahuilla of the eastern Coachella Valley. Cahuilla membership was defined in terms of lineages or clans, with each lineage or clan belonging to one of two main divisions of the people, known as moieties. Their moieties were named for the Wildcat, or *Tuktum,* and Coyote*,* or *Istam*. Individual clans had villages, or central places, and territories they called their own, for purposes of hunting game, and gathering raw materials for food, medicine, ritual, or tool use. They interacted with other clans through trade, intermarriage, and ceremonies.

For the Cahuilla ceremonies and song cycles commemorated such milestones initiation rites, seasonal gathering events, death, cremation, and mourning. Prior to the influence of Christianity, Cahuilla custom was to cremate the dead and whatever possessions they had not given away prior to their passing. The archaeological record includes fragmented groundstone, arrowheads, shell beads, fire-affected rocks, and other materials often found in association with cremation remains and buried at relatively shallow depths. Burnt ceramic sherds are often found in association with cremations as well.

A wide range of plants and animals served as a source of food, fiber, shelter and tools for hunting and gathering. The Cahuilla diet included seeds, roots, wild fruits and berries, acorns, wild onions, piñon nuts, and mesquite and screw beans. Medicinal plants such as creosote, California sagebrush, yerba buena and elderberry were typically cultivated near villages. Common game animals included deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, rabbits, wood rats, fish and waterfowl. Hunting technology included throwing sticks, clubs, nets, traps, and snares, as well as bows and arrow. Common tools included manos and metates, mortars and pestles, hammerstones, fire drills, awls, arrow-straighteners, and stone knives and scrapers. These lithic tools were made from local and more distantly sourced materials. Such materials as wood, horn, and bone spoons and stirrers were also used; baskets for winnowing, leaching, grinding, transporting, parching, storing, and cooking; and pottery vessels for carrying water, storage, cooking, and serving food and drink.

Estimates of Cahuilla population prior to European settlement are uncertain but range from 3,600 to as high as 10,000 persons covering a territory of over 2,400 square miles. During the mid-1800s, the Cahuilla population was decimated by European diseases, most notably smallpox, for which the Native peoples had no immunity. Today, Mountain Cahuilla descendants are affiliated with numerous reservations in the area, including Morongo, Santa Rosa, Los Coyotes, Cahuilla, Agua Caliente, Cabazon, Torres Martinez, and Augustine among others. There has been a resurgence of traditional ceremonies in recent years, and the language, songs, and stories are now being taught to the youngest generations.

Historic Period

Removed and isolated from earliest European colonization of the coastal regions during the Spanish and Mexican Periods (1769-1848), the San Jacinto Mountains received only passing interest from European colonizers. The name of the mountain range was derived from a nearby mission rancho that was established at least by 1821 in the San Jacinto Valley. In 1772, Captain Pedro Fages, the Spanish military *comandante* of Alta California, and a small force of soldiers under his command became the first Europeans to approach the San Jacinto Mountains. Throughout the Spanish and Mexican Periods, however, this high mountain country remained the domain of the Cahuilla people, and there is no evidence that the Europeans extensively explored it.

With the influx of immigrants from the eastern United States to the fertile but arid plains and valleys of southern California following the American annexation of Alta California in 1848, the San Jacinto Mountains were increasingly recognized as a valuable deposit of natural resources. In the 1860s, shepherds and cattlemen began to penetrate into the mountain range and graze their herds on its lush meadows. Between the 1870s and the early 20th century, the lumber industry exploited the rich forest. During the 1880s land boom in southern California, the Lake Hemet reservoir was constructed in the mountains to divert water to the colony of Hemet in the San Jacinto Valley and gold mining left its mark during this time in the San Jacinto Mountains.

Strawberry Valley, in which the community of Idyllwild is situated, received the first homesteaders by 1871 or earlier. During the early 1870s, the valley was a favorite grazing ground for shepherds, followed by cattlemen in the 1880s. Beginning in 1889, Strawberry Valley gained increasing popularity as a summer resort. One of the earliest tourist camps in the valley, Camp Idyllwilde, eventually bestowed its name on the community that gradually grew at that location, albeit with a slightly different spelling.

In 1913, George B. Hannahs subdivided part of his land holdings into 2.5-acre lots, and in 1919, Idyllwild, Inc. offered half-acre home lots for $350 in what is now the central portion of Idyllwild, ushering a real estate boom that lasted through the 1920s. About a mile to the northeast, the Idyllwild Mountain Park Company developed the community of Fern Valley where the Project site is located, intended primarily for summer homes. Despite a brief rivalry, with the area entering a second “golden age” in growth, by the early 1950s the distinction between the two communities diminished to such a degree that both are recognized as Idyllwild. Since then, the twin mountain community has steadily grown into a town of more than 4,000 residents, with tourism continuing to play a crucial role in the local economy.

Research and Field Surveys

As noted in the source materials for this discussion, CRM TECH conducted an extensive literature and records search for this Project utilizing a broad range of sources. Project archaeologists and historians also corresponded and communicated with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and contacted 14 local Native American groups. Local tribes contacted include nearby Cahuilla Band of Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians. Historical background research included published literature in local and regional history, various contemporary news accounts, U.S. General Land Office (GLO) land survey plat maps dated 1880, USGS topographic maps dated 1901-1996, and aerial/satellite photographs taken in 1972-2023.

Field surveys of the Project area were carried out in September 2024 with the assistance of Native American representatives of the Cahuilla Band. The surveys were completed on foot at an intensive level along parallel transects placed on either side of the project centerline. In this way, the ground surface in the entire Project area was inspected systematically and carefully for any evidence of human activities dating to the prehistoric or historic period (i.e., 50 years or older). Ground visibility was overall considered to be adequate for a systematic inspection of the surface for evidence of archaeological remains.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The literature and records search indicate that no cultural resources of either prehistoric or historic origin were previously recorded specifically within the Project area. It is appropriate to note that the entire community of Idyllwild was recorded in 1974 as a California Point of Historical Interest (Site 33-009520). No specific site boundaries or maps were provided, with just the general location of Strawberry Valley cited.

Beyond the Project boundaries and within a one-mile radius, at least 37 previous cultural resources studies have been reported to the Eastern Information Center (EIC) at UC-Riverside on various tracts of land and linear features. As a result, an additional 28 additional sites and four isolates (localities with fewer than three artifacts) have been recorded within the scope of the records search. Among them, 11 of the sites and all four isolates were prehistoric in origin, consisting predominantly of bedrock milling features but a rock art panel, campsite, and cave site with numerous artifacts were also reported. The isolates were lithic flakes, groundstone, or both. The other 17 sites date to the historic period. Among them were roads, dams, refuse dumps, and trails, as well as buildings and groups of buildings such as the Idyllwild Inn. None of these sites or isolates was found in the immediate vicinity of the Project area, and thus none of them requires further consideration during this study.

Beginning around the middle of the 20th century, Strawberry Creek became the source of drinking water for the growing residential and mountain resort communities in the Idyllwild area, being drawn upon by several local water districts. In 1948, a 420,000-gallon tank was installed by the Fern Valley Mutual Water Company. Later reports noted the construction of small check dams along Strawberry Creek to improve water flow and provide year-round fishing. By the 1930s-1950s, with the founding of the Fern Valley community by the Idyllwild Mountain Park Company, a loose grid of roads lined with scattered buildings had emerged around the Project location.

The Project field surveys included the recorded check dam of historical origin observed at the northern end of the Project area, recorded into the California Historical Resources Inventory, and designated temporarily as Site 4038-1H, pending assignment of a permanent identification number. This is the subject Project's diversion structure proposed for reconstruction/rehabilitation. The check (diversion) dam is constructed of what appear to be locally sourced boulders and sand and may have been built as early as circa 1945, according to information provided by the IWD, but has been largely modernized in appearance through maintenance and upgrading during the ensuing decades. As evidenced by at least two modern applications of concrete holding the southern half of the dam together, most of the dam has been repaired at times, probably after flood damage.

A modern grate and filter system was installed in the pool immediately above the dam in the 1990s, when the creek bottom from the dam to a wooden bridge on Tahquitz Road approximately 75 feet to the northeast was also lined with concrete. Downstream to the southwest and beyond the boundaries of the Project area are a deep plunge pond with a wrought iron ladder and a number of local rock-and-grout check dams and retaining walls. Information from the IWD indicates that those features likely date to the 1920s or 1930s.

Both Tahquitz Road and Fern Valley Road are located in or near the Project boundaries, and date at least to the 1950s as paved roads and trace their roots further into at least the late 1930s. However, as working components of the modern transportation infrastructure, the appearance of both roads reflect the results of frequent maintenance and upgrading during the modern period. As such, they do not exhibit any distinctively historical character and are not considered potential "historical resources." No other features or artifact deposits of prehistoric or historic origin were encountered within or adjacent to the Project area during the field surveys.

Beyond the subject check dam (diversion structure), no other potential "historical resources" have been identified. As a common, minor water control/conveyance feature from the late historic period, the Project diversion structure (dam) is not known to be associated with any particular persons or events of recognized historic significance, nor is it known to represent the work of a prominent engineer or builder. As a product of standard design and construction, the dam does not represent an important example of any style, type, period, or region, and for the same reason it does not demonstrate the potential to yield any important historical data. Based on these considerations, the analysis concludes that Site 4058-1H does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and thus does not qualify as an "historical resource" under CEQA provisions. Therefore, the subject reconstruction/rehabilitation of the diversion structure will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5 and impacts will be less than significant.

b) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The historical and archaeological surveys and assessment prepared for the Project determined that no other features or artifact deposits of prehistoric or historic origin occur at or near the Project site and that the previously disturbed sediments within the Project boundaries, lying on the edge of a residential property or in the right-of-way of a paved road, do not demonstrate any particular sensitivity for intact, potentially significant archaeological deposits. Therefore, the Project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5 and impacts will be less than significant. Nonetheless, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 is set forth below to further ensure that potential impacts to sensitive historical or archaeological resources will be less than significant.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** It is not expected that any human remains would be present on the subject site, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. However, in the event than any unanticipated remains are encountered during Project construction, California law requires that the coroner is contacted, and that all work must stop in the area of the find. The coroner is responsible for determining whether the remains are modern or of cultural significance, and if the latter, must contact the NAHC, who is responsible for identifying the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The NAHC will then contact the appropriate local tribe and coordinate the proper disposition of the remains. These standard legal requirements will ensure that construction activities associated with the proposed channel rehabilitation will have a less than significant impact on any unanticipated human remains in the APE.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-1 If buried cultural materials are discovered during grubbing, grading, trenching, excavation, or any other earth-moving activities on the Project site, all work within 50 feet of the find must be halted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the finds.

Monitoring and Reporting

CUL-A In the event sensitive cultural materials are discovered, a report of findings shall be filed with the District, including an itemized inventory of the identified cultural materials, and upon completion of the field and laboratory work, an analysis of any recovered artifacts.
Responsible Parties: Contractor**,** Project archaeologist, District, Project Engineer.
Schedule: Within 30 days of the completion of ground disturbing activities on the Project site.

VI. ENERGY **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			✓	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			✓	

Sources: Riverside County Climate Action Plan (November 2019); The Carl Moyer Program Guidelines Volume I: Program Overview, Program Administration and Project Criteria, approved by the California Environmental Protection Agency Air Resource Board on April 27, 2017; Average Fuel Economy by Major Vehicle Category, last updated January 2024. U.S. Department of Energy. Accessed October 17, 2024. https://afdc.energy.gov/data/10310; California Emissions Estimator Model Version 2022.1.1.28.

Setting
Primary energy sources, the energy contained in raw fuels, include fossil fuels (e.g. oil, coal, and natural gas), nuclear energy, and renewable sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower. Secondary sources of energy, which is energy that has been converted or stored, include electricity, heat, biofuels, hydrogen, and gasoline. The primary sources of energy in Riverside County are electricity and natural gas. Fossils fuels are the primary energy source for most vehicular transportation. The Riverside County Climate Action Plan 2019 Update conducted a community-wide inventory from all GHG sources located within the unincorporated areas of the County. Table 4 shows community-wide electricity and natural gas usage for Riverside County in 2017 and also shows community-wide vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a measure of transportation fuel consumption in the County.

Table 4
Community-Wide Energy Use in Unincorporated Riverside County (2017)

Energy Category	**Community-Wide Use in 2017**
Electricity	
Southern California Edison (SCE)	2,080,338,050 kWh
Imperial Irrigation District (IID)	829,657,212 kWh
Anza Electric Cooperative, Inc.	59,236,020 kWh
Natural Gas	
Southern California Gas (SoCalGas)	89,469,089 therms
Transportation	
Annual VMT	4,284,955,458 miles

Source: County of Riverside Climate Action Plan Update (November 2019), Table 3-1.

The community of Idyllwild receives electricity from Southern California Edison (SCE) and natural gas from the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas).

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) Less than Significant Impact. Energy resources would be used on a short-term basis during construction of the Project and will be limited to transportation energy demands (diesel and gasoline). Once construction is completed, operational energy demands would be limited to periodic maintenance of the diversion structure requiring a worker truck trip; however, energy use associated with these activities would be negligible. The Project would not generate a demand for electricity or natural gas.

Construction Energy Demand: Energy will be consumed during construction for activities associated with grubbing, land clearing, grading, excavation, installation of pipelines, paving and materials hauling. The primary energy source during construction would be petroleum fuels (i.e. gasoline and diesel), which would be used for the operation of heavy equipment, manufacturing and transport of materials, and transport of construction workers. Electricity would be used to a lesser extent, in order to power electric equipment and worksite lighting.

Table 5 provides construction equipment fuel estimates based on the construction activity timeline, construction equipment schedules, equipment power ratings, and load factors programmed in CalEEMod. The aggregate fuel consumption rate for all equipment is estimated at 18.5 horsepower hour per gallon (hp-hr-gal.), per the California Are Resource Board's (CARB's) Carl Moyer Program Guidelines, Table D-21 Fuel Consumption Rate Factors.[3] For analysis purposes, CalEEMod assumes all construction equipment is diesel powered. As shown in the table below, Project construction activities would consume an estimated 2,296 gallons of diesel fuel.

Table 5
Construction Equipment Fuel Consumption Estimates

Phase	Days	Equipment	HP Rating	Qty	Usage Hours	Load Factor	HP-hrs/day	Fuel Consumption
Grubbing and Land Clearing	7	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	84	1	8	0.37	249	94
	7	Rubber Tired Dozers	367	1	8	0.4	1,174	444
Grading and Excavation	14	Graders	148	1	8	0.41	485	367
	14	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	84	1	8	0.37	249	188
	14	Excavators	36	1	8	0.38	109	83
	14	Concrete/Industrial Saws	33	1	4	0.73	96	73
Drainage, Utilities, and Sub-grade	14	Forklifts	82	1	4	0.2	66	50
	14	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	84	1	8	0.37	249	188
	14	Other Material Handling Equipment	93	1	8	0.4	298	225
	14	Trenchers	40	1	8	0.5	160	121
	14	Generator Sets	14	1	8	0.74	83	63
Paving	7	Paving Equipment	89	1	8	0.36	544	206
	7	Other Material Handling Equipment	93	1	8	0.4	513	194
Construction Equipment Fuel Demand (Gallons Diesel Fuel)								**2,296**
Fuel consumption = [((Usage Hours x Qty.) x Load Factor) x HP Rating]/18.5 x Number of Days								

[3] The Carl Moyer Program Guidelines Volume I: Program Overview, Program Administration and Project Criteria, approved by the California Environmental Protection Agency Air Resource Board on April 27, 2017.

Table 6 shows the estimated annual fuel consumption resulting from Project construction worker trips. The construction phase duration, trip type, daily worker trips, and trip lengths were derived from the Project's CalEEMod detailed report. The average vehicle fuel economy estimates were derived from the U.S. Department of Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center.[4] For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the majority of worker trips are by cars (24.4 miles per gallon (mpg), gasoline) and hauling trips are by Class 8 trucks (6.4 mpg, diesel). As shown in the table below, it is assumed that 741 gallons of fuel will be consumed related to construction work vehicle trips.

Table 6
Construction Worker Fuel Consumption Estimates

Phase	Duration (Days)	Trip Type	Worker Trips/ Day	Trip Length (Miles)	VMT	Avg. Fuel Economy (mpg)	Fuel Consumption (gallons)
Grubbing and Land Clearing	7	Worker	15	18.5	1,942.5	24.4	80
Grading and Excavation	14	Worker	15	18.5	3,885.0	24.4	159
Drainage, Utilities, and Sub-grade	14	Worker	15	18.5	3,885.0	24.4	159
		Hauling	5	20	1,400.0	6.4	219
Paving	7	Worker	15	18.5	1,942.5	24.4	80
		Hauling	2	20	280.0	6.4	44
Construction Worker Vehicle Fuel Demand (Gallons of Fuel)							**741**

Is summary, the total fuel consumption related to Project construction would be 3,037 gallons. It should be noted that the use of construction equipment and construction worker trips would represent a "single-event" fuel demand and would not require an on-going demand for fuel resources. In addition, the equipment used for Project construction would conform to CARB regulations and California emissions standards intended to clean up construction equipment fleets by retiring older models for newer, cleaner models. Compliance with anti-idling and emissions regulations would result in a more efficient use of construction-related energy and the minimization or elimination of wasteful or unnecessary consumption of energy. Overall, gasoline and diesel fuels consumed for transportation during construction of the Project would be temporary and would not be wasteful or inefficient, and it would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

[4] Average Fuel Economy by Major Vehicle Category, last updated January 2024. U.S. Department of Energy. Accessed June 11, 2024. https://afdc.energy.gov/data/10310

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				✓
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			✓	
iii) Seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction?				✓
iv) Landslides?			✓	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✓	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				✓
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?				✓
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				✓
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				✓

Sources: Riverside County General Plan (2015); County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 960 Draft EIR No. 521 (February 2015); Riverside County General Plan Figure S-2 "Earthquake Fault Study Zones," in GIS database; Natural Hazards Mapping, Analysis, and Mitigation: General Plan Technical Background Report, Earth Consultants International, 2000; San Jacinto fault zone in the Peninsular Ranges of southern California. *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, *78*(6), 705-730; Guidelines For Evaluating And Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California", Special Publication 117, 2008; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Web Soil Survey https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx (accessed August 2024); California Department of Conservation EQ Zapp https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/ (accessed June 2023); South Coast AQMD Rule Book http://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/rules/scaqmd-rule-book/regulation-iv (accessed June 2023);

Setting

The Project and surrounding lands are located in the mid-elevation of the San Jacinto Mountains, part of the Peninsular Mountain Ranges of Southern California, which extend south into Baja California. The Project site occurs at an elevation of 5,730 feet above sea level. The geology of the area is influenced by two major fault systems that traverse this area of southern California, the San Andreas Fault Zone located 15.5± miles to the northwest and the San Jacinto Fault Zone located 8.5± miles to the southwest. The San Andreas Fault has the potential to generate a 7.2 magnitude earthquake and strong groundshaking in the project area.

San Jacinto Fault Zone

The planning area is 5± miles northwest of the Blackburn Canyon fault, a splay of the San Jacinto Fault Zone and a mapped Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Area. The San Jacinto Fault Zone has the greatest potential to impact the Project planning area, with strong groundshaking. It is comprised of a series of right-lateral strike slip faults with an average slip rate of 7 to 17 mm/year. The calculated maximum probable quake magnitude in this zone is estimated to be 6.5 to 7.5 on the Richter scale. The last earthquake in the zone occurred in 1968 with a Mw of 6.5 along the Coyote Creek segment.[5]

Liquefaction

Seismically induced liquefaction is the loss of soil strength caused by a sudden increase in pore water pressure after an earthquake, particularly as a result of strong ground shaking. Loose sands and gravels have a higher risk of liquefaction. Liquefaction occurs when strong seismic shaking of a saturated sand or silt causes intergranular fluid (porewater) pressures to increase to levels where grain-to-grain contact is lost, and material temporarily behaves as a viscous fluid. Liquefaction can cause settlement of the ground surface, loss of bearing, settlement and tilting of structures, flotation and buoyancy of buried structures and fissuring of the ground surface. The Project area and the San Jacinto Mountains in general lie outside areas of potential liquefaction.

Landslides and Soil Erosion

The Project area occurs on gently sloping terrain in the upper reaches of Fern Valley with an elevation from the diversion structure of 5,730± feet to 5,716 feet at the south terminus of the subject pipeline. The relatively thin layer of soils are comprised of the Wind River-Oak Glen Families Association (KoD) and are underlain by granite gravels, cobble and boulders. Soils are non-expansive and are well-drained with moderately rapid permeability. Slopes, both natural and cut, are expected to be stable and the potential of landslides at and in association with the proposed project is expected to be less than significant. The potential for the loss of topsoils or substantial soil erosion is also considered to be less than significant.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources are the remains and/or traces of plant and animal life such as bones, teeth, shells, and wood that are found in geologic deposits. The Riverside County General Plan (Chapter 5, Multi-Purpose Open Space) requires development to avoid paleontological resources whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, development is required to minimize and fully mitigate impacts to the resource. The Project site is located on the upper slope of the west front of the San Jacinto Mountains. The County General Plan identified the Project area has having a "low" potential to harbor sensitive paleontological resources RivCo GP Figure OS-8).

Discussion of Impacts

a.i) **No Impact.** Fault rupture occurs when movement in a deep fault in the earth breaks through to the surface. According to Alquist-Priolo (A-P) Earthquake Fault Zoning mapping of the California Geological Survey, the project area is not located in an active fault zone, the closest A-P fault zone occurring 5± miles to the southwest. There will be no impact.

[5] Southern California Earthquake Data Center, Caltech Seismology Lab, accessed 10.6.24, https://scedc.caltech.edu/earthquake/sanjacinto.html#:~:text=Hot%20Springs%20and%20Buck%20Ridge%20Faults&text=At%20its%20extreme%20northern%20end,as%20the%20Lytle%20Creek%20fault.

a.ii) **Less than Significant.** The Project area is located in a seismically active region and is influenced by two active faults. As noted above, the Project site is 5± miles northwest of the Blackburn Canyon fault, a splay of the San Jacinto Fault Zone and a mapped Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Area. The San Jacinto Fault Zone has the greatest potential to impact the Project planning area, with strong groundshaking. The calculated maximum probable quake magnitude in this zone is estimated to be 6.5 to 7.5 on the Richter scale. The San Andreas Fault Zone located 15.5± miles to the northwest and has the potential to generate a 7.2 magnitude earthquake and strong groundshaking in the Project area. The primary hazard associated with seismic ground shaking is the risk of collapse of buildings or other structures. The Project does not involve the construction of structures that are particularly vulnerable to damage due to strong groundshaking. The Project site will not be occupied, and therefore it would not expose any such individuals to the risk of strong shaking. Overall, provided the Project will comply with all applicable seismic and structural design codes, and impacts related to seismic ground shaking will be less than significant.

a.iii) **No Impact.** Seismically induced liquefaction is the loss of soil strength caused by a sudden increase in pore water pressure after an earthquake, particularly as a result of strong ground shaking. Loose sands and gravels have a higher risk of liquefaction. The subject site is underlain by soils comprised of the Wind River-Oak Glen Families Association (KoD) which are in turn underlain by granite gravels, cobble and boulders. Soils are non-expansive and are well-drained with moderately rapid permeability. According to the County General Plan EIR Technical Background Report, the Project site is not located in an area with susceptibility to liquefaction. Neither are site soils susceptible to seismically induced liquefaction and settlement could result in lateral spreading. The proposed Project will not include any structures that would be inhabited and will not create a substantial risk to loss, injury, or death. There would be no impacts associates with either liquefaction or lateral spreading.

a.iv) **Less than Significant Impact.** According to Figure S-4 in the Riverside County General Plan, the Project subject site is not directly in an area identified as susceptible to landslides and is designated as having a low potential for landslides. The Project will not result any occupants on the subject site, the proposed diversion structure rehabilitation and pipeline will not result in substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, as a result of landslides. Impacts will be less than significant.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** As noted above, the Project site is comprised of gently sloping terrain at elevations of 5,730± feet to 5,716 feet or approximately 5% slope. The relatively thin layer of soils are underlain by granite gravels, cobble and boulders. Slopes, both natural and cut, are expected to be stable and the potential of landslides at and in association with the proposed project is expected to be less than significant. The potential for the loss of topsoils or substantial soil erosion is also considered to be less than significant.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project site is located on a geologic unit or soil that is stable and is expected to remain so during and following completion of the reconstruction of the diversion structure and installation of the new underground pipeline. There is a less than significant potential for the project to result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse. Slopes, both natural and cut, are expected to be stable and the potential of landslides at and in association with the proposed project is expected to be less than significant. The potential for slope instability, including landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse is considered to be less than significant.

d) **No Impact.** Expansive soils are those which expand in volume when an increase in moisture content occurs. The relatively thin layer of soils of the project site are comprised of the Wind River-Oak Glen Families Association (KoD) and are underlain by granite gravels, cobble and boulders. Soils are non-expansive and are well-drained with moderately rapid permeability. The Project site will not be inhabited, will not otherwise include businesses or other occupied structures. It will therefore not create a substantial risk to life or property, and no impacts will occur.

e) **No Impact.** The proposed Project will not include septic tanks or other forms of wastewater disposal. There will be no impact.

f) **No Impact.** According to Figure 4.9.3 in the Riverside County General Plan EIR, the Project area is of low paleontological sensitivity. Paleontological resources are not expected to occur within the Project site, and thus would not be destroyed by the proposed Project. Neither are there any unique geologic features within or near the project area that would be affected by the Project. There will be no impact.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓	

Sources: Sources: CalEEMod Version 2022.1; Draft Guidance Document – Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Threshold, prepared by SCAQMD, October 2008; Riverside County Climate Action Plan Update (March 2019); California Health and Safety Code.

Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. GHGs are emitted during natural and anthropogenic (human-caused) processes. Anthropogenic (human-caused) emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and have led to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. The California Air Resources Board is required to monitor and regulate seven GHGs: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), nitrogen trifluoride (NF_3), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).[6]

State laws, such as Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 32 (SB 32), require cities and other jurisdictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. SB 32 is the extension of AB 32 and requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. The CARB 2022 Scoping Plan provides an update to the 2017 Scoping Plan. Pursuant to SB 32, the plan sets forth the state's plan to stay on track towards reducing GHG emission to at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. The 2022 Plan Update expands on earlier targets, establishing a new goal of reducing GHG emissions to 85% below 1990 levels by 2045. Additionally, the 2022 Plan Update establishes a path for the state to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 through technologically feasible, cost-effective means.[7]

[6] California Health and Safety Code §38505 (g).
[7] California Air Resources Board, 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (November 2022).

The 2019 County of Riverside Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update establishes the County's efforts to reduce GHG emissions in line with the targets set by AB 32 and SB 32. Consistent with CARB's climate change scoping plan, the CAP aims for a 49% reduction below baseline (2008) levels by 2030 and an 80% reduction below 2008 levels by 2050. To meet these targets, the County would need to reduce 2030 emissions by 525,511 MT CO_2e from an adjusted business-as-usual forecast, and by 2,982,947 MT CO_2e by 2050.

On December 5, 2008, the SCAQMD formally adopted a greenhouse gas significance threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2e$/yr for stationary source industrial uses where SCAQMD is the lead agency (SCAQMD Resolution No.08-35). This threshold was adopted based upon an October 2008 staff report and draft interim guidance document that also recommended a threshold for all projects using a tiered approach. It was recommended by SCAQMD staff that a project's greenhouse gas emissions would be considered significant if it could not comply with at least one of the following "tiered" tests:

- Tier 1: Is there an applicable exemption?
- Tier 2: Is the project compliant with a greenhouse gas reduction plan that is, at a minimum, consistent with the goals of AB 32?
- Tier 3: Is the project below an absolute threshold (10,000 $MTCO_2e$/year for industrial projects; 3,000 $MTCO_2e$/year for residential and commercial projects)?
- Tier 4: Is the project below a (yet to be set) performance threshold?
- Tier 5: Would the project achieve a screening level with off-site mitigation?

The Riverside County CAP Update establishes a review process for new development projects. Under this process, it must first be determined whether a project is subject to CEQA and will exceed the 3,000 MT CO_2e emission level. The 3,000 MT CO_2e threshold is based on the GHG threshold adopted by SCAQMD, described above. If a project's annual emissions are anticipated to exceed 3,000 MT CO_2e, then the Project must either use the County's Screening Tables or must quantify and disclose the GHG emissions anticipated to result from the proposed development.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) **Less than Significant Impact.** As described in Section III, Air Quality, the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1.1.28 was used to project the Project's air quality emissions, including greenhouse gas emissions (Appendix A). The proposed development will generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during construction. Operational emissions associated with the proposed Project would be nominal and would be limited to negligible emissions resulting from the off gassing of materials and potential minor and temporary maintenance activities. Therefore, Project-related GHG emissions are limited to short-term construction activities associated with operation of construction equipment, employee commutes, material hauling, and other ground disturbing activities. The Project buildout assumptions inputted to CalEEMod are detailed in Section III, Air Quality.

Therefore, to determine whether the Project's construction emissions will result in a cumulatively considerable impact, buildout GHG emissions were amortized over a 30-year period to be compared with applicable GHG thresholds. According to the CalEEMod outputs, the Project's total GHG emissions over the two-month construction period would generate 28.1 metric tons of CO2e (MTCO2e) per year. Amortized over 30 years, the Project's annual GHG emissions would be 0.937 MTCO2e per year.

The projected 0.937 MTCO2e annual emissions associated with the proposed Project are significantly below the Tier 3 absolute threshold of 3,000 MTCO2e. Therefore, based on the SCAQMD "tiered tests", the Project would not generate significant levels of GHGs, and associated environmental impacts would be less than significant. In addition, because the Project's annual emissions are below 3,000 MT CO_2e, the Project is not required to complete the County's CAP Screening Tables.

Consistency with Local GHG Reduction Measures

The GHG emissions associated with stream diversion structure and pipeline reconstruction activities will be temporary and will not substantially affect climate or interfere with the Riverside County Climate Action Plan. All components of construction, including equipment, fuels, and materials will be subject to current regulations of GHGs and equipment efficiency standards. Overall, given that the proposed Project would only temporarily generate GHGs during construction, and that the annual emissions are projected to be well below the SCAQMD threshold, impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			✓	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✓
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				✓

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓	
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.			✓	

Sources: Riverside County General Plan and EIR (2015); Riverside County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023); CalFire FRAP and FHSZ map https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=31219c833eb54598ba83d09fa0adb346 (accessed August 2024); State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov (accessed June 2024); Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/ (accessed June 2024);

Setting

According to the Riverside County General Plan Safety Element and the Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, there are few hazardous materials generators in the Idyllwild area. Most of the risk associated with potentially hazardous materials is the result of the transport of such materials on local highways. The County is responsible for coordinating with the appropriate agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites and regulation of their timely cleanup.

Hazardous Materials Sites

There are two hazardous materials sites within approximately one mile of the project site. These include the Idyllwild Chevron Station located at 25015 Highway 243. This was the site of a gasoline leak that contaminated soils. The impacts were mitigated and the case was closed in 2002. The second site was the Village Food and Fuel market located at 26128 Highway 243 a short distance south of the Chevron Station. As with the Chevron station, the issue was also a gasoline storage tank leak that was monitored for several years, with the case being closed in 2014. No other hazardous materials spills or leaks have been identified in the project area. The Project site is located 0.91± miles northeast of State Highway 243 and 3.8± miles northwest of State Highway 74.

Wildfire Hazards

Much of the Idyllwild community, including the Project area, is located in a heavily wooded forest area within a high wildfire hazard zone under the jurisdiction of state and federal agencies, including Calfire. The nearest fire station is the Riverside County Fire Station No. 23 located at 24919 Marion Ridge Road in the Pine Cove neighborhood, approximately 3.5 travel miles to the west of the project site. The community of Idyllwild is a participant in the CERT program. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medial operations. CERT members assist their fellow citizens/coworkers in their community or workplace following a disaster. CERT members take an active role in their community by preparing for a disaster, thus reducing their own impact risk.

Schools and Airports

The closest school is the Idyllwild Middle School located 1.56± miles southwest of the project site at 26700 Highway 243 in Idyllwild. The Idyllwild Montessori School is located 1.75± miles to the southwest at 53785 Country Club Drive serving pre-school and K-5 students. There are no airports in the Project area.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) **Less than Significant Impact.** Construction of the Project could temporarily involve the use of potentially hazardous materials such as chemicals, oils, fuels, lubricants, paints, and solvents. These substances would primarily be involved in the operation and maintenance of construction machinery involved in the reconstruction of the diversion structure and construction of the new pipeline. A staging area for storing materials has been identified, and the handling, storage, and use of these materials would be subject to local, state, and federal laws, including California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CalOSHA) requirements.

Given that the Project is limited to the in-situ reconstruction of the existing Strawberry Creek diversion structure and installation of a new underground pipeline, it will not involve the routine transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials during long-term operations. The Project would also not be expected to 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. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

c) **No Impact.** The Project site is not within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The proposed channel rehabilitation project would thus have no impact associated with emitting or handling hazardous materials in proximity of a school. The closest school is the Idyllwild Middle School located 1.56± miles southwest of the Project site at 26700 Highway 243 in Idyllwild. The Idyllwild Montessori School is located 1.75± miles to the southwest at 53785 Country Club Drive serving pre-school and K-5 students. The Project will not impact a nearby school.

d) **No Impact.** The Project site is not listed as a hazardous materials site according to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database and the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker database. There are two hazardous materials sites within approximately one mile of and down-gradient from the project site. These include the Idyllwild Chevron Station located at 25015 Highway 243. This was the site of a gasoline leak that contaminated soils. The impacts were mitigated and the case was closed in 2002. The second site was the Village Food and Fuel market located at 26128 Highway 243 a short distance south of the Chevron Station. As with the Chevron station, the issue was also a gasoline storage tank leak that was monitored for several years, with the case being closed in 2014. No other hazardous materials spills or leaks have been identified in the project area. The Project site is located 0.91± miles northeast of State Highway 243 and 3.8± miles northwest of State Highway 74. Therefore, based on the EnviroStor and GeoTracker databases, the Project is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiles pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and it would not create any significant hazards to the public or the environment as a result. No impact will occur.

e) **No Impact.** The Project is not located within an airport land use plan, nor is it within two miles of a public use airport. The Hemet-Ryan Airport is located approximately 19.5 miles west of the project area, and the Palms Springs International Airport is located approximately 11.6 miles west of the subject site. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in any airport-related safety hazards or excessive noise for people residing or working within the Project area. There would be no impact.

f) **No Impact.** The Riverside County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP) was updated in 2023, and includes priority actions to mitigate hazards, as well as actions to coordinate plans and resources in the event of an emergency. The proposed Project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. According to the MJLHMP, key evacuation routes in the Idyllwild area include Highways 243 and74. While construction activities associated with the Project could involve temporary access limitation along adjacent segments of Tahquitz Road and Fern Valley Road, there are alternatives routes out of the neighborhood and neither Fern Valley Road not Tahquitz Road are considered key evacuation routes. Furthermore, the construction would be temporary, and a construction access plan will be required by the District to ensure the Project does not interfere with emergency access during construction. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

g) **No Impact.** The County MJLHMP classifies the fire hazard in the Project area as high. According to Riverside County General Plan (Figure A-11), the subject site is in a State Responsibility Area and within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Nearby lands occur within a Federal Responsibility Area and are also designated as VHFHSZ. The Project proposes the in-situ reconstruction of a diversion structure and construction of a segment of new underground pipeline. It does not propose the development of any residential buildings or other structures for human occupation.

The Project therefore would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. As a matter of standard best management practices (BMPs) the Project will enforce a no-smoking rule in all portions of the construction zone, fueling areas and near combustible or flammable storage locations. On-site flammable liquids will be stored in approved containers. And the Project contractor shall initiate and enforce a good housekeeping policy to minimize accumulation of scrap and combustible debris. Impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				✓
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:			✓	
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			✓	
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;			✓	
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			✓	
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?			✓	
(d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				✓

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

Source: Site field surveys; Project development plan; USGS Quad Maps; Project Improvement Plans, ERSC, Inc., August 2024; FEMA Panel 1540 of 3805, Map No. 06065C154G, August 28, 2008.

Setting

Idyllwild and the west slope of the San Jacinto Mountains can be characterized as having a warm summer Mediterranean climate with cool to cold winters and occasional rainstorms and snowfall. Winter (January) mean daytime temperatures are 42.3°F with mean nighttime temperatures of 18.5°F. Summer (July) mean daytime temperatures are 70.2°F with mean nighttime temperatures of 55.2°F. Average January precipitation is 4.74 inches and average July precipitation is o.47 inches.[8] The maximum daily rainfall record is 6.66 inches (December 5, 1966) and the largest daily snowfall total was 22.0 inches on March 24, 1966.

Regional Surface Water Hydrology

The Project area and surrounding lands are designated as occurring in Flood Zone D on the FEMA flood maps for the area. Zone D is defined as "Areas in which flood hazards are undetermined, but possible". As evidenced by the February 14, 2019 flood event, which saw 7.77± inches of rain in 24 hours, Strawberry Creek is subject to substantial flows in a major rainfall event within its watershed. It appears that snow melt was an important contributor to flood volumes in 2019. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) precipitation Atlas 14 data[9], the 100-year, 24-hour storm would generate 10±inches of rainfall in the Project vicinity. There are no in-creek stormflow estimates for Strawberry Creek. Snow and rainfall were approximately 63 percent of normal in 2023.

District Water Resources

Water resources in the Idyllwild area consist of surface runoff from rain and snow melt, groundwater and surface water storage (Foster Lake) to recharge the groundwater basin. Due to the geological conditions in the mountains, the area does not have large groundwater basins and water supplies are constrained by this condition, variations in precipitation and limited storage. The subject Strawberry Creek diversion structure is one of several surface water intercepts that capture and convey surface runoff to storage tanks and Foster Lake. The groundwater basins are unconfined and movement of groundwater within the basin is not constricted in the basin profile due to high permeability. The District has 17 wells, 11 of which were in operation in 2023 and range in depth from 88 to 500 feet. Foster Lake storage is used to naturally recharge the underlying groundwater basin, and received surface water from Lilly Creek and Strawberry Creek. In 2023, IWD produced approximately eight million gallons per month of potable water.

Water Quality and Water Quality Standards

The IWD publishes an annual water quality report. The 2023 report states that during this period water supplies were tested for a variety of potential contaminants, including chlorine, nitrate, copper, lead, iron, manganese, zinc, sulfate, total dissolved solids, and turbidity. None of the measures potential contaminants exceeded regulatory levels and are declared clean and safe. IWD potable water is treated before it is placed into the District distribution system. IWD complies with state (California Department of Public Health) and federal (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) drinking water quality standards. Each year, IWD monitors domestic water wells for regulated and unregulated chemicals that are not detected during regular, ongoing monitoring. The domestic water supply meets current state and federal standards.

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8 Idyllwild-Pine Cove Census Designated Place". *Geographic Names Information System*. United States Geological Survey, United States Department of the Interior. Retrieved October 20, 2014.

9 NOAA Atlas 14 Point Precipitation Frequency Estimates, https://hdsc.nws.noaa.gov/pfds/pfds_map_cont.html?bkmrk=ca, accessed 10.8.2024.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **Less Than Significant With Mitigation.** For the proposed Project, construction activities within the creek will be limited to the use of hand tools, and the extensions of concrete pumping hoses and possibly jack-hammer hoses. There will be no vehicles of power equipment within the creek. A staging area will be established immediately adjacent to the western portion of the Tahquitz Road right of way and will also serve as a laydown area for the planned six-inch pipe. Construction activities at the site would entail the use of motorized equipment along the pipeline alignment for trench excavation and preparation, and pipe placement. Associated potentially hazardous materials, such as fuels (gasoline and diesel), oils and lubricants, and cleaners (e.g., solvents, corrosives, soaps, detergents), which are commonly used in construction projects would all be stored and managed within the staging area. During construction, accidental spills could occur and potentially cause a discharge of hazardous materials to surface or groundwater and violating water quality standards. Preparation of staging areas and construction site prior to construction will require limited clearing and grubbing. All removal will be mechanical, and no use of herbicides is anticipated for this purpose.

There will be little or no new excavation in the creek bed. The existing diversion structure will be removed and framing for the new structure will occur in the same location with minimal creek bed disturbance. A tilt-up screen (trash rack) will also be installed 8 feet upstream of the diversion structure, supported on framed bracing of Portland cement concrete. The existing creek concrete lining will be repaired as required. Impacts will be essentially the same as with the existing structure

Uncured concrete is extremely alkaline with a pH near 12 and this caustic material is harmful to plants and wildlife. Leaching of any caustic materials will occur over several days as the concrete cures in place and affected waters will be neutralized along the downstream flows across more acidic soils and other materials in the creek bed. Impacts to in-stream water quality are expected to be less than significant.

Other ground-disturbing activities during construction could result in increased soil erosion and input of sediment into non-creek surface runoff. It should be noted that in the existing soils are dry and subject to fluvial erosion. Under the proposed Project, grading, excavation and other ground-disturbing activities may contribute to near-term soil erosion. Project activities that could increase soil erosion include:

- Demolition and excavation of existing concrete and earthen materials,
- Excavation for pipeline installation,
- Use of motorized equipment for trenching, watering, and hauling, and
- On-site stockpiling of excavated materials or soils to be used for backfill.

Soils in the project area would be disturbed during construction as a result of material excavation along the channel bed and banks, and during construction and use of unpaved roads. Erosion may also occur at the Project staging area, where initial grading and subsequent disturbance by construction equipment would destabilize soils, leaving them vulnerable to erosion. Soils stockpiling, hauling or backfill would be especially vulnerable to erosive effects of wind and rain. As soils in the Project area are relatively easily erodible, even soils that are stockpiled properly may erode as a result of rain or high winds.

Impacts associated with excessive erosion include degraded water quality and excessive sedimentation. Erosion would be limited by application of a variety of methods and materials to stabilize disturbed surfaces, including on-going site watering, which is planned as part of project construction.

Temporary or portable sanitary facilities provided for construction workers could be a source of sanitary waste that could affect the human use environment if not properly managed. The use and maintenance of these facilities, however, is regulated, and any contractor engaged to provide the service will be subject to and must implement these regulations.

Construction BMPs referenced above and required by Mitigation Measures set forth below, will effectively reduce or avoid the discharge of any pollutants of concern that might enter nearby receiving waters by establishing limits of construction and the use of a variety of standard practices, including silt berms and fences, earth dikes, drainage swales, sediment traps, check dams, reinforced soil retaining systems, temporary sediment basins and flow diversion, as appropriate. In accordance with the Riverside County Santa Ana Region MS 4 Permit Order No. R8-2010-0033 (NPDES No. CAS618033), the Project is not a Priority Development project. Therefore, no post-construction BMPs are required. With the application of mitigation set forth below the project will not exceed wastewater discharge requirements, and impacts to water quality will be less than significant.

To protect the water quality during construction, temporary construction BMPs are considered and incorporated into the Project as appropriate, would include:

- Soil stabilization (erosion control) techniques such as on-going site watering, soil binders, etc.;
- Sediment control methods such as detention basins, silt fences, inlet protection and dust control;
- Contractor training programs;
- Material transfer practices;
- Waste management practices such as providing designated storage areas and containers for specific waste for regular collection;
- Concrete washout slurry shall be discharged and disposed of in an approved manner;
- Street sweeping/tracking control practices;
- Vehicle and equipment cleaning and maintenance practices; and
- Fueling practices.

By following the procedures outlined in the mitigation measures set forth below, impacts to water quality associated with construction activities would be less than significant because pollution, contamination or nuisance as defined in Section 13050 of the California Water Code (CWC) or violation of regulatory standards as defined in the applicable NPDES stormwater permit or Water Quality Control Plan for receiving water body would be minimized and less than significant with mitigation.

Operational Impacts

Diversion structure and pipeline operation and maintenance impacts that could affect water quality will be very limited and less than significant. The District's periodic diversion structure inspections and annual maintenance will follow well-established protocols. Biological resources are dependent on aquatic resources downstream of the project site since the receiving waters have beneficial uses. A wide range of project design elements, including inert and non-toxic materials, and regular maintenance, will ensure that post-construction the Project does not violate any water quality standards or wastewater discharge requirements, and will preclude adverse impacts to aquatic resources in the project area and downstream and therefore have a less than significant impact on water quality.

Impacts to the local and regional water quality would be less than significant with application of the mitigation measures set forth below.

With the application of Best Management Practices set forth in the project Water Quality Management Plan the proposed Project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Construction at the site will be subject to all applicable water quality standards for waste discharge requirements of the District. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is not required because the Project disturbs less than 1 acre of erodible soil. Compliance with existing regulations and requirements will result in a less than significant impact on water quality standards and waste discharge requirements.

By adhering to standard programmatic permits and work site management protocol, as well as adherence to the mitigation measures set forth below, the Project's impacts on water quality will be less than significant.

b) **No Impact.** The reconstruction of the subject diversion structure and pipeline will require very limited groundwater resources for site watering, hydroconsolidation of soils, dust control and incidental uses. Once completed, the Project will require no new surface or groundwater use excepting possible use in conjunction with periodic diversion structure maintenance. Therefore, the Project will not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. There will be no impacts.

c) (i) **Less Than Significant.** The Project will involve approximately 700 feet of trenching for the installation of a new underground pipeline. The proposed pipeline alignment includes areas with trees and shrubs and large areas of bare ground. Slopes along the pipeline alignment are approximately 5%. Excavation and replacement trench soils is not expected to generate silt or eroded soils, nor will this work or post-construction conditions result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Reconstruction of the diversion structure will not create or cause substantial soils erosion, dust generation or siltation within the creek or on adjacent lands. As discussed above (see X.a), above) a wide range of BMPs to control dust generation and soils erosion and discharge will be mitigated to less than significant levels. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

c) (ii) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project involves the reconstruction of an existing diversion structure, which will continue to serve and convey intercepted and diverted creek runoff from the same tributary watershed and there will be no net increase or decrease in creek flows or diversions. Therefore, the Project will not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner and will not induce flooding on- or off-site. Therefore, there will be less than significant impacts regarding increases in the rate or amount of runoff.

c) (iii) **Less Than Significant Impact.** As noted in section c) (ii), above, the Project involves the in-situ reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and installation of a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline. The Project will neither create nor contribute new runoff that would exceed the design capacity of any local drainage. Neither is the Project expected to create additional sources of pollution once construction is completed. During construction, a range of BMPs will be applied to avoid and minimize the potential for Project construction to discharge additional polluted runoff. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

c) (iv) **No Impact.** As noted in section c) (ii) and c) (iii), above, the Project involves the in-situ reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and installation of a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline. The Project will not create or contribute new runoff, nor will the Project create any new impedance to or redirect flood flows. Therefore, the Project will have no new impacts on impeded or redirected storm flows.

d) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will reconstruct in-situ and existing diversion structure and install a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline. The Project will not alter existing drainage facilities and will not create any new flood hazards, will not occur within or be susceptible to tsunami or seiche zones, nor is there a meaningful risk of release of pollutants due to project inundation. Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

e) **No Impact.** The proposed Project involves the in-situ reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and installation of a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline. The Project will not **c**onflict with or obstruct implementation of any water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

Mitigation Measures:
The planned reconstruction of the subject diversion structure and installation of a new 700-foot pipeline segment has taken into consideration the relationship to and potential impacts on the existing and long-term water quality in the creek and surrounding lands. Overall, the Project will have a significant beneficial impact on the provision of a safe, clean and dependable domestic water supply to residents in the community, providing substantial improvements to essential facilities. The following measures are set forth to ensure that Project impacts are below levels of significance.

HYD-1 Project Plan Review
Prior to finalizing the Project design and engineering plans, said plans shall be reviewed and approved by the District Engineer to ensure that these improvements do not interfere with or adversely affect creek capacity or the ability of the District to manage and maintain these facilities.

HYD-2 NPDES Requirements
The Project shall comply with the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

HYD-3 General BMPs
The implementation of BMPs during construction activities shall ensure that erosion and siltation from excavation, earthmoving and other construction activities is limited. Exposed soil from excavated areas, stockpiles, and other areas where ground cover is removed shall be stabilized by wetting or other approved means to avoid or minimize the inadvertent transport by wind or water. Temporary construction BMPs considered and incorporated into the project, as appropriate, would include:

- Soil stabilization (erosion control) techniques such as on-going site watering, soil binders, etc.;
- Sediment control methods such as detention basins, silt fences, and dust control;
- Temporary de-silting basins may be constructed incrementally along the pipeline alignment, as needed, to store construction runoff, and will be backfilled as pipeline installation progresses;
- Contractor training programs;
- Material transfer practices;
- Waste management practices such as providing designated storage areas and containers for specific waste for regular collection;
- Concrete washout slurry shall be discharged and disposed of in an approved manner;
- Work area cleaning/tracking control practices;
- Vehicle and equipment cleaning and maintenance practices; and
- Fueling practices.

HYD-4 Petroleum BMPs
To prevent petroleum products from contaminating soils and water bodies in the creek, the following BMPs shall be implemented:

a) Motorized construction equipment shall not be placed within or cross the creek or creek bed, with all in-creek work to be accomplished by hand and extension-supported equipment, including (if needed) pneumatic hammer hose or concrete pump hose.
b) Construction equipment and vehicles shall be properly maintained to prevent leakage of petroleum products.
c) Vehicle maintenance fluids and petroleum products shall be stored, and/or changed in staging areas established at least 100 feet from delineated streams and other drainages. These products must be discarded at disposal sites in accordance with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
d) Drip pans and tarps or other containment systems shall be used when changing oil or other vehicle/equipment fluids.
e) Areas where discharge material, overburden, fuel, and equipment are stored shall be designed and established at least 100 vegetated (permeable) feet from the edge of delineated streams.

f) Any contaminated soils or materials shall be disposed of off-site in proper receptacles at an approved disposal facility.
g) All erosion control measures shall be inspected and repaired after each rainfall event that results in overland runoff. The Project contractor shall be prepared year-round to deploy and maintain erosion control BMPs associated with the Project.

Monitoring and Reporting:

HYD-A Project Plans shall be reviewed and approved by the District Engineer to ensure that these improvements do not interfere with or adversely affect creek capacity or the ability of District to manage and maintain these facilities.
Responsible Parties: Project Design Engineer, District Engineer
Schedule: Prior to finalizing the hydraulic design and engineering plans.

HYD-B The Project shall comply with the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).
Responsible Parties: District Engineer, Contractor
Schedule: Prior to and during construction activities.

HYD-C Implement BMPs during construction activities by approved means to avoid or minimize the inadvertent transport by wind or water.
Responsible Parties: District Engineer, Contractor
Schedule: Prior to and during construction activities.

HYD-D To prevent petroleum products from contaminating soils and water bodies in the creek, the HYD-5 BMPs shall be implemented.
Responsible Parties: District Engineer, Contractor
Schedule: Prior to and during construction activities.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Physically divide an established community?				✓
b) 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?				✓

Sources: Riverside County General Plan (2015); County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 960 Draft EIR No. 521 (February 2015).

Setting
The Project site is located in the Fern Valley neighborhood of Idyllwild in a residential subdivision comprised of numerous single-family homes and cabins in heavily forested lands with numerous local roadways with varying levels of improvement. Riverside County Land use designations include Medium Density Residential (MDR) and Open Space-Water (OS-W) in the creek area. County Zoning includes R-1A-9000 in area residential lands and W-1 Water Ways along Strawberry Creek.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **No Impact.** The Project involves the in-situ reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and installation of a 700±-foot segment of underground pipeline. The subject pipeline will be placed in a recently acquired easement immediately west of and adjacent to the existing Tahquitz Road on a private lot; the southerly portion of the pipeline will be installed within the existing public right of way Fern Valley Road where it will tie into and existing underground pipeline. The Project will not separate or otherwise affect an existing, established neighborhood and will have no impacts in this regard.

b) **No Impact.** The subject diversion structure has been in place for decades and the proposed in-situ reconstruction and associated underground pipeline would continue to conform to the land use and zone designated for the site and area. The existing and proposed facilities will not change conditions either within the residential neighborhood or in Strawberry Creek and are consistent with existing land use and zoning designations. The planned facilities are consistent with General Plan policies for residential development and open space lands so designated for the protection of water ways and resources. The proposed Project therefore would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation, nor would it cause any significant environmental impacts as a result. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓

Sources: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx, access 10.9.24; Mineral Resources and Resource Potential Map of the Pyramid Peak Roadless Area, James P. Calzia, US Geological Survey, 1988; Riverside County General Plan (2015); County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 960 Draft EIR No. 521 (February 2015).

Setting

The Project area occurs on gently sloping terrain in the upper reaches of Fern Valley with an elevation from the diversion structure of 5,730± feet to 5,716 feet at the south terminus of the subject pipeline. The areas of gentler slope have been extensively subdivided and developed with single-family homes, cabins and vacation rentals. The relatively thin layer of soils are comprised of the Wind River-Oak Glen Families Association (KoD) and are underlain by granite gravels, cobble and boulders. Soils are non-expansive and are well-drained with moderately rapid permeability. These soils occur at an elevation range of 4,600 to 6,000 feet and are comprised of eroded granite, with materials at depths of 45 to 49 inches comprised of weathered bedrock.

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) was adopted to ensure both the preservation of mineral resources and the protection of the environment. Pursuant to SMARA, the state Mining and Geology Board designates mineral resource sectors within geographic areas where significant mineral resources of statewide importance and regional significance are located. No mineral resource mapping was identified in the research, the nearest mapped mineral resource area being the Pyramid Peak Roadless Area located to the northeast along the upper elevation of the east front to the San Jacinto Mountains. Principle minerals identified are gold (low yield) and marble.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) **No Impact.** The entirety of the Project area, including the Project site, is located in ana area where important mineral resources have not been mapped and no mining has historically occurred in the area. The site and surrounding lands are well developed with residences at a "medium density" and the site is less than one acre in extent. The Project site is not designated, used, or planned for mineral resource extraction or development. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on mineral resources.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

XIII. NOISE **Would the project result in:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Generation of substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			✓	

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

Sources: Riverside County General Plan (2015); County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 960 Draft EIR No. 521 (February 2015); County of Riverside Ordinance No.847; CA/T Equipment Noise Emissions and Acoustical Usage Factors Database, FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide (2006) by U.S. Department of Transportation (accessed June 2023); Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual (September 2013); Federal Transit Administration, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (May 2006).

Setting

The primary source of noise in the Fern Valley neighborhood of Idyllwild is traffic noise, including from regional highways, such as California State Routes 74 and 243, which are located approximately one mile from the Project site. Other noise generators in the community include limited construction activities and commercial delivery activities, and landscape maintenance equipment. Residences, schools, libraries, and senior care facilities are considered noise-sensitive receptors. The Project site is located in a quiet residential neighborhood with limited traffic noise. The Hemet-Ryan Airport is located approximately 19.5± miles west of the Project site. The Palms Springs International Airport is approximately 11.6± miles northeast of the subject site.

County Noise Standards

The Noise Element in the County General Plan provides a Noise Compatibility Matrix (Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments) which defines the acceptable noise level for different land uses in the County. The County Noise Ordinance sets standards for community noise levels. "Normally Acceptable" average exterior ten minute noise level range for single family residential land uses is 55 to 65 dBA CNEL. The ten-minute average interior sound level limit in all residential zones is 55 dBA from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and 40 dBA from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. These noise level limits do not include temporary noise generated by construction activities. Pursuant to the County Noise Ordinance, construction activities must be limited to the following hours:

Table 7
Riverside County Stationary Source Land Use Noise Standards[1]

Land Use	Interior Standards	Exterior Standards
Residential		
10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	40 L_{eq} (10 minute)	45 L_{eq} (10 minute)
7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	55 L_{eq} (10 minute)	65 L_{eq} (10 minute)
[1] These are only preferred standards; final decision will be made by the Riverside County Planning Department and Office of Public Health.		

Groundborne Vibration

Groundborne vibration is sound radiated through the ground. Typical outdoor sources of perceptible groundborne vibration are construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads. Groundborne vibration is measured as peak particle velocity (PPV) in inches per second, or as vibration decibels (VdB). It is discussed in decibel (dB) units in order to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. The human threshold of perception for vibration is 65 Vdb, or 0.0018 inches/second, and is not usually significant until 70 Vdb, or 0.0031 inches/second. Typical levels of ground vibration range between 50 Vdb and 100 Vdb. Vibration caused by heavy truck traffic is generally around 65 Vdb. In comparison, construction related vibration can range between 90 Vdb and 100 Vdb.

The effects of ground-borne vibration generally include movement of building floors, rattling of windows, and rumbling sounds. Ground-borne vibrations associated with construction attenuate rapidly as one moves away from the source. According to Caltrans, vibration caused by truck traffic attenuates to below perception levels at distances greater than 130 feet. The County has specific standards for construction vibrations. Table 10 provides Caltrans and County standards for reference and comparison. Ground borne vibration can fall off quickly with distance, dropping to about 6 mm/second (0.23 inch/sec) at 15 meters (49.2 feet) from the source and can also be further reduced by "soft site" conditions as is the case with soils and vegetation.

Discussion of Impacts

a) Less than Significant Impact.

Construction Noise: Project construction will require the use of light and heavy equipment that would temporarily increase noise levels in the vicinity of the site. Construction noise will be generated as a result of grubbing, excavation and grading, as well as possibly hammering and concrete pumping. These activities may involve equipment such as utility trucks, graders and excavators, water trucks, compactors, front-end loaders, back-hoe, and haul trucks. As noted herein, pipeline trenching will comprise the most extensive construction activity and will be conducted incrementally. Table 8 provides reference noise levels at 50 feet associated with construction equipment typical of a project of this nature:

Table 8
Typical Construction Equipment and Associated Noise Levels

Equipment Type	Reference Noise Level at 50 feet (dBA Lmax)
Flat Bed Truck	74.0
Rubber Tired Dozer	82.0
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	79.0
Excavator	81.0
Grader	85.0
Auger Drill Rig	85.0
Drum Mixer	80.0
Jackhammer	89.0
Vibrator Plate Compactor	104.0

Source: CA/T Equipment Noise Emissions and Acoustical Usage Factors Database, FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide (2006) by U.S. Department of Transportation (accessed June 2023).

Ordinance No. 847 regulates noise in the County, including through the provision of maximum allowable noise standards for General Plan land use designations. The ordinance includes various exemptions, including private construction projects located within one-quarter (1/4) of a mile from an inhabited dwelling, provided that:

1. Construction does not occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. during the months of June through September; and
2. Construction does not occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. during the months of October through May.

Given the Fern Valley location in a residential neighborhood, construction activities may exceed the County noise limit for residential land uses. However, construction-related noise will be temporary, and high noise levels would be intermittent. Moreover, construction activities related to the proposed channel rehabilitation will be subject to the permitted hours pursuant to Ordinance 847, and as provided in Table 8, above. Provided the Project adheres to these hours, any construction-related noise temporarily increasing the ambient noise level in the vicinity of the subject site would not be in excess of the standards established in the general plan or noise ordinance. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Noise: Once the proposed diversion structure is reconstructed and the pipeline installation is complete, the Project site would not be expected to generate noise. While occasional noise associated with maintenance activities is anticipated, these activities would be temporary and periodic. Moreover, maintenance of the diversion structure would be exempt from the County's noise ordinance, which applies to the operation and maintenance of public works projects. Therefore, operational noise associated with the diversion structure would not temporarily or permanently increase ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project site in excess of standards established in the County general plan or noise ordinance. There would be no impact.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** In addition to noise generation, construction activities associated with the Project may result in some groundborne vibration. The County and Caltrans have established standards for vibration, including vibration generated by construction equipment. According to the Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual, the threshold for building damage resulting from vibration is 0.3 in/sec peak particle velocity (PPV),[10] and the threshold for human annoyance is 0.01 in/sec PPV. Table 9 shows the vibration levels associated with typical construction equipment at 25 feet.

Table 9
Typical Construction Equipment and Associated Vibration Levels

Equipment Type	PPV (in/sec) at 25 feet
Small Bulldozer	0.003
Jackhammer	0.035
Loaded Trucks	0.076
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Plate Compactor	0.23

Source: Federal Transit Administration, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (May 2006).

Table 10
Construction Vibration Standards

Jurisdiction	Municipal Code Section(s)	Construction Vibration Standards
Caltrans	Transportation- and Construction-Induced Vibration Guidance Manual	**Building Damage:** 0.12 in/sec PPV* **Human Annoyance:** 0.01 in/sec PPV
County of Riverside	County of Riverside GP Noise Element, Policy 16.3	0.01 in/sec RMS (0.254 mm/sec RMS)

***Notes:** "PPV" = Peak Particle Velocity; "RMS" = Root-Mean-Square.

As shown in the tables above, structures located more than 25 feet from construction operations would not experience groundborne vibration above the Caltrans thresholds. Given that the Project is bound by residential streets on the east and south, most construction activities would occur more than 25 feet from any existing structures. The nearest residence will be between 60 and 65 feet from the closest portion of the Project construction site. Construction equipment expected to be associated with the Project includes a backhoe/front-end loader, water truck, and haul trucks. If needed, a jackhammer may be used to break up the existing diversion structure so it can be removed, and forms placed for the concrete pour for the new structure.

[10] Vibration damage potential threshold for older residential structures. Fragile and historic buildings may be damaged at lower vibration levels, but do not occur in the Project vicinity.

While the use of a plate compactor is not anticipated, its use could exceed the Caltrans threshold for human annoyance for residents within 25 feet if operation. Most or all of the Project construction will occur 60 feet or more from such activities; therefore, no significant vibratory impacts are anticipated. While residents in the immediately vicinity of the Project site may detect groundborne vibration during construction activities, impacts would be temporary and would end once construction is complete. As stated above, construction activities would also be limited by the daytime operations hours provided in the County Noise Ordinance. Groundborne vibration will not be generated during long-term Project operation. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

c) **No Impact.** The Project site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The Project site is located in a quiet residential neighborhood with limited traffic noise. The Hemet-Ryan Airport is located approximately 19.5± miles west of the Project site. The Palms Springs International Airport is approximately 11.6± miles northeast of the subject site. The Project would thus not expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels related to airport operations. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				✓
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓

Sources: Idyllwild Community Profile, Riverside County, prepared by Esri; E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, California Department of Finance, January 1, 2022; 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, September 2020.

Setting

The community of Idyllwild is unincorporated, and its geographic extent varies with the source reviewed. For purposes of this analysis, the Riverside County Community Profile[11] was used to characterize the demographics of the community. In this context, the community is assumed to be comprised of Idyllwild, Pine Cove and Fern Valley.

[11] Idyllwild Community Profile, Riverside County, prepared by Esri with forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography. January 30, 2024.

The population based on the 2020 US Census was 4,163 and had decreased modestly to 4,060 by 2023 probably in association with the Co-Vid epidemic. The community had a total of 3,958 housing units in 2020, of which 34.1% were owner-occupied, 13.8% were renter occupied, and 52.1% were vacant (probably seasonal residents). The average household occupancy in 2020 was 2.1 persons.

Discussion of Impacts

a) **No Impact.** The Project proposes the reconstruction of an existing stream diversion structure and construction of a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline in the residential neighborhood of Fern Valley in Idyllwild. No changes to the length or course of the existing Strawberry Creek are proposed under the Project. Proposed improvements include the rehabilitation and reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and the replacement of an existing above-ground water conveyance pipe with one to be placed underground. Inasmuch as the channel already exists on the site and the nature of the proposed improvements, the proposed Project is not expected to indirectly induce any population growth. Given that no homes or businesses are proposed, and that the Project will not result in extensions of infrastructure, the Project would also not directly induce growth. There will be no impacts.

b) **No Impact.** The Project property is occupied by an existing home and existing Tahquitz Road and Fern Valley Road. The diversion structure and associated pipeline have existed on the subject site for decades. No housing occurring on the site or in the vicinity will be affected by the Project and no new housing will be constructed. The Project would not displace any existing people or housing or necessitate replacement housing elsewhere. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES **Would the project result in:** Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**

Fire protection?			✓	
Police protection?			✓	
Schools?				✓
Parks?			✓	
Other public facilities?			✓	

Sources: Riverside County General Plan, 2015; Idyllwild Fire Protection District Capital Improvement Plan 2021/24; Riverside County Sheriff's Department web site https://www.riversidesheriff.org; Riverside County Parks Foundation, https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/idyllwild-regional-park; Hemet Unified School District, https://www.hemetusd.org/#:~:text=Hemet%20Unified%20School%20District%20Home .

Setting

Fire Protection
The Project area is located in a heavily wooded forest area within a high wildfire hazard zone under the jurisdiction of state and federal agencies, including Calfire. The nearest fire station is the Riverside County Fire Station No. 23 located at 24919 Marion Ridge Road in the Pine Cove neighborhood, approximately 3.5 travel miles to the west of the project site. The community of Idyllwild is a participant in the CERT program. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medial operations. CERT members assist their fellow citizens/coworkers in their community or workplace following a disaster. CERT members take an active role in their community by preparing for a disaster, thus reducing their own impact risk.

Police Protection
Police protective services are provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and is served by the sheriff's station located at 56570 Highway 74, Mountain Center, approximately 4.5 miles south of the Project site. Other nearby Sheriff stations include those in San Jacinto and Hemet to the west.

Schools
The community of Idyllwild is located within the Hemet Unified School Districts and its closest school is the Idyllwild Middle School located 1.56± miles southwest of the Project site at 26700 Highway 243 in Idyllwild. Other schools include the Idyllwild Montessori School located 1.75± miles to the southwest at 53785 Country Club Drive serving pre-school and K-5 students and the Idyllwild Arts Academy at 52500 Temecula Road in Idyllwild.

Parks
The community of Idyllwild is served by a variety of public parks and open space areas. These include the 202-acre Idyllwild Regional Park operated by Riverside County, Mount San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness, and Humber Park located on Fern Valley Road and upslope of the project site. Other parks and open space in the area include Lake Fulmer, Lake Skinner and Lake Hemet.

Other Public Facilities
Other public facilities in the community include the Idyllwild Branch Library located at 54401 Village Center Drive in Idyllwild, the Idyllwild US Post Office located at 54391 Village Center Drive in Idyllwild, Idyllwild Community Center located at 25925 Cedar Street in Idyllwild, and other government facilities. None of these facilities will be affected by the proposed Project.

Discussion of Impacts

Fire Protection: Less Than Significant Impact. The District will require the Project contractor to prepare a Construction Traffic Control Plan to ensure emergency access to the subject site and the surrounding

residential neighborhoods is maintained throughout construction. Once reconstruction/rehabilitated of the diversion structure and pipeline are completed, the facility will not adversely affect the provision of fire protection in the area, nor would it result in the need for new or physically altered facilities. The Project will therefore have a less than significant impact on fire protection services.

Police Protection: Less Than Significant Impact. As stated above, a Construction Traffic Control Plan will be prepared for the Project to ensure that emergency access and generally mobility is maintained in the Project area. The rehabilitation/reconstruction of the existing diversion structure will not generate a significant additional demand for police protection and would not result in the need for new or physically altered facilities. The Project would therefore have less than significant impacts on police protection.

Schools: No Impact. The proposed diversion structure reconstruction/rehabilitation does not include any residential units of habitable structures and would not result in a permanent increase in the local population. It would therefore not result in any impacts to school enrollment and would not require the provision of new or additional facilities. The Project will have no impact on schools.

Parks/Other Public Facilities: Less Than Significant Impact. The Project would not result in any land development or population increase that could generate long-term demand for parks or other public facilities. As discussed in Section XVI, below, the subject site comprised of an occupied residential lot and public rights-of-way. There would be no effect on and no disruption to any park or open space resource in the area. The Project's impacts on public services and facilities are expects to be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

XVI. RECREATION **Would the project:**	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				✓
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				✓

Sources: Riverside County Parks Foundation, https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/idyllwild-regional-park; Mt. San Jacinto State Park, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=636; Idyllwild Regional Park, https://rivcoparks.org/regional-parks-campgrounds/idyllwild-regional-park.

Setting
The community of Idyllwild is served by a variety of public parks and open space areas. These include the 202-acre Idyllwild Regional Park operated by Riverside County, Mount San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness, and Humber Park located on Fern Valley Road and upslope of the project site. Other parks and open space in the area include Lake Fulmer, Lake Skinner and Lake Hemet.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will not affect any park or open space lands or access to them. This infrastructure rehabilitation project will increase the use of any neighborhood or regional park or other recreational facilities. The Project will have no impact on area parks, recreational facilities or other public open space areas.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

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

Sources: Riverside County General Plan and EIR (2015); Project Improvement Plans, 2024;

Setting
The proposed Project will rehabilitate and reconstruct an existing stream diversion structure located approximately 25 feet downstream of Tahquitz Road, a partially improved local street with a 50-foot right-of-way, and will also extend a new 700-foot segment of underground pipeline approximately 45 feet west of and parallel to Tahquitz Road to Fern Valley Road, where it will proceed west underground to a point of connection to an existing water line. Upon completion of the new diversion system (structure and pipeline), the existing above-ground 6-inch steel pipeline running along Strawberry Creek and to District's property will be permanently decommissioned and taken

out of service. Those portions that are at or above ground will be manually severed into manageable lengths and removed by hand from their current location. Those portions that are that are underground will be abandoned in-place by capping, plugging or filling with a cement type slurry to render inoperable. There are no sidewalks, bike lanes or paths, and no transit routes in the Project vicinity.

The existing and future facilities do not generate any traffic, nor would they during future, post-rehabilitation/reconstruction operations. During construction of the proposed Project, temporary traffic associated with construction activities may occur, as well as potential traffic disruptions. The Project staging area is planned adjacent to the west Tahquitz Road right-of-way adjacent to the eastern portion of the pipeline extension (see Exhibits 4 and 5).

Discussion of Impacts

a) **No Impact.** The streets surrounding the Project site are fully or partially built out, and the Project is bound on the south by existing Fern Valley Road and on the east by existing and partially improved Tahquitz Road. There are no on-street bicycle lane or adjoining sidewalks. The Project is not expected to affect local intersection and roadway levels of service (LOS). Project traffic will focus on the planned staging area immediately west of Tahquitz Road and will terminate once the rehabilitation/reconstruction is completed. Construction of the Project may involve temporary impacts to traffic flow on surrounding roadways. These impacts would be limited in scope and intensity. Appropriate traffic management and control measures will be followed during construction period. The Project will not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There will be no impact.

b) **No Impact.** CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b), which took effect in 2020, requires all lead agencies to adopt vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a replacement for automobile delay-based level of service (LOS) for analyzing transportation impacts. A limited amount of vehicle trips, and associated VMT, would result from construction of the proposed Project. Upon completion of construction, the proposed channel rehabilitation would not generate VMT. Given that the Project would not generate VMTs during operations, it can be concluded that the channel rehabilitation will not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b), and there will be no impacts related to VMT.

c) **No Impact.** The Project does not propose the construction of new roadways or improvements. It would therefore not result in any hazardous design features including sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or hazardous geometric features. The Project will not generate vehicle trips during operations and, therefore, no hazards would result from incompatible uses.

As previously stated, appropriate traffic management and control measures will be followed during construction period. This will ensure that no hazards result due to road conditions during construction of the proposed Project, including when construction equipment enters and leaves the site. Any construction activities that could temporarily disrupt circulation on surrounding roadways, including emergency access or evacuation, must be coordinated with the District. Overall, the Project will not increase hazards, and no impacts will result.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** No changes will be made to the existing roadways in the area such that emergency access would be impeded. As previously stated, appropriate traffic management and control measures will be followed during the construction period. Any construction activities that could temporarily disrupt circulation on surrounding roadways, including emergency access or evacuation, must be coordinated with the District. Overall, the Project will not increase hazards or result in inadequate emergency access, and impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Monitoring and Reporting: None required.

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

Sources: Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report for Strawberry Creek Diversion Pipeline Project, prepared by CRM Tech, October 25, 2024; Riverside County General Plan Update & Environmental Impact Report, 2015 (SCH 2009041065); "The Cahuilla," Lowell John Bean and Lisa Bourgealt, Chelsea House Publishers, 1969.

Setting

As discussed in Section V, Cultural Resources, the San Jacinto Mountains are part of the traditional lands of the Cahuilla people. Anthropologists generally divide the Cahuilla into three groups based on their geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the San Gorgonio Pass-Palm Springs area, the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rose Mountains and the Cahuilla Valley, and the Desert Cahuilla of the eastern Coachella Valley.

Today, Native Americans of the Mountain Cahuilla heritage are mostly affiliated with one or more of the reservations in and near the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains, including Cahuilla Band, Santa Rosa Band and Agua Caliente Band.

Tribal Cultural Resources
CEQA defines tribal cultural resources as a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is included on a local register of historical resources (PRC §5020.1(k)), or that is listed as a historical resource in the California Register (PRC §5024.1(c)).

The following discussion of impacts is primarily based on the findings of the cultural resources study conducted for the Project by CRM TECH in October, 2024 (see Appendix C of this IS/MND) and information set forth in Section V of this IS/MND.

Discussion of Impacts

a. i, ii) Less Than Significant with Mitigation. As stated in Section V, Cultural Resources, the records search at the EIC found that the Project's area of potential effects (APE) had not been previously surveyed for cultural resources, and no cultural resources had been recorded within or adjacent to the Project site. The field surveys also did not find any potential cultural resources, including buildings, structures, objects, sites, features or artifacts. Furthermore, given the disturbance of the site for roads, stream diversions and residential development, and the distribution of known prehistoric resources identified by the records search, the geoarchaeological analysis concluded that the archaeological sensitivity of site is low.

The State of California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) conducted a search of the Sacred Lands File at the request of CRM TECH on September 9, 2023. The results of the Sacred Lands File search were negative.

CRM TECH contacted the nearby Agua Caliente Band, the Cahuilla Band, the Santa Rosa Band, as well as representatives of eleven other tribes in the region, for input: Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, Cahuilla Band of Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Pechanga Band of Indians, Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, and the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. The Project archaeologists also notified the nearby Cahuilla Band of Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians of the upcoming archaeological fieldwork and invited tribal participation.

Four of the tribes contacted have responded to the inquiry in writing. Among them, the Pechanga Band and the Rincon Band stated that the Project location was outside their ancestral territory and recommended that other tribes in closer proximity be consulted instead. The Agua Caliente Band and the Cahuilla Band, meanwhile, found the Project location to be a part of their traditional use areas. Additionally, the Agua Caliente Band identified the Project vicinity to be a sensitive area with known tribal cultural resources nearby. Therefore, both the Agua Caliente Band and the Cahuilla Band requested to review all cultural resource documentation generated for this Project as well as the presence of Native American monitors during ground-disturbing activities in the project area.

Summary of Impacts
Overall, none of the sources consulted during the cultural resources survey found evidence of resources occurring within the Project area, including tribal cultural resources. In the event that buried cultural materials are discovered during earth-moving operations associated with the proposed Project, all work in the immediate area shall be halted or divert until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find (**CUL-1**).

With implementation of this mitigation measure, it can be concluded that the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resources. Impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation Measures:
See Section V, Cultural Resources.

Monitoring and Reporting:
See Section V, Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measures:
See Section V, Cultural Resources.

Monitoring and Reporting:
See Section V, Cultural Resources.

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

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				✓

Sources: County of Riverside Integrated Waste Management Plan (1996). CalRecycle Solid Waste Information System (SWIS) https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/5189?siteID=4186 (accessed June 2023); Project Reconstruction/Rehabilitation Plans prepared by WSP, 2024.

Setting

District Water Resources and Quality

Water resources in the Idyllwild area consist of surface runoff from rain and snow melt, groundwater and surface water storage (Foster Lake) to recharge the groundwater basin. Due to the geological conditions in the mountains, the area does not have large groundwater basins and water supplies are constrained by this condition, variations in precipitation and limited storage. The subject Strawberry Creek diversion structure is an existing surface water intercept that capture and convey surface runoff to storage tanks and Foster Lake. The groundwater basins are unconfined and movement of groundwater within the basin is not constricted in the basin profile due to high permeability. The District has 17 wells, 11 of which were in operation in 2023 and range in depth from 88 to 500 feet. Foster Lake storage is used to naturally recharge the underlying groundwater basin and receives surface water from Lilly Creek and Strawberry Creek. In 2023, IWD produced approximately eight million gallons per month of potable water.

The IWD publishes an annual water quality report. The 2023 report states that during this period water supplies were tested for a variety of potential contaminants, including chlorine, nitrate, copper, lead, iron, manganese, zinc, sulfate, total dissolved solids, and turbidity. None of the measured potential contaminants exceeded regulatory levels and are declared clean and safe. IWD potable water is treated before it is placed into the District distribution system. IWD complies with state (California Department of Public Health) and federal (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) drinking water quality standards. Each year, IWD monitors domestic water wells for regulated and unregulated chemicals that are not detected during regular, ongoing monitoring. The domestic water supply meets current state and federal standards.

Wastewater Treatment

The Idyllwild Water District is also a provider of sanitary sewerage collection and treatment services. The District's wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1966 and became operational in 1971 after the construction of the collection system was completed. Currently, IWD provides water and sewer services to approximately one third of the community of Idyllwild, covering a service area of 2,520 acres through 1,650 water and 587 sewer connections.[12]

Stormwater Management

Riverside County Flood Control District is responsible for regional drainages in the community. There are no county-managed drainages in the project vicinity. Local drainages include Strawberry Creek, Marion Creek, Logan Creek, North Fork San Jacinto River, and others. The subject diversion structure is located within the streambed of Strawberry Creek and has had no significant adverse effect on the creek's drainage function. The proposed realigned pipeline does not cross any drainages.

Electric Power and Natural Gas

Southern California Edison (SCE) provides electrical services to the Project area. Most neighborhoods were developed prior to the undergrounding of electric facilities and have overhead power lines, including the Project area. An existing overhead power line is located along the west side of Tahquitz Road. There appear to be no conflicts between the proposed Project, including the planned staging area, and existing power poles and lines.

[12] Idyllwild Wastewater Treatment Plan Improvement Project Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, May 2024.

Natural gas is provided to the region by the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas or SCG). SCG has no facilities in the community. Propane tanks are commonly used throughout the community.

Solid Waste
Waste Management, Inc. provides solid waste disposal to the community through a franchise agreement. Non-hazardous household, commercial, and most nonhazardous industrial solid waste collected is taken to the Idyllwild Transfer Station located at 28100 Saunders Meadow Road. This station also provides an "ABOP" and "PaintCare" drop-off as an environmentally safe way to properly dispose or recycle the most common types of hazardous household waste. Wastes accepted at the Idyllwild ABOP include antifreeze, household and auto batteries, used oil and filters and a variety of paints.

Discussion of Impacts

a-c) Less than Significant Impact.

Water
The proposed diversion structure reconstruction/rehabilitation project and associated pipeline replacement will not generate any new long-term water demand and temporary Project water demand will be limited to that needed for site watering, hydroconsolidation and other construction purposes. While streamflow diversion will occur post-construction, this diversion occurs now and there will be no increase in diversion flow. There will therefore be less than significant impacts on the local water supplier's ability to serve reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

The Project will not require a new connection to existing domestic water lines, nor will it otherwise require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities. No environmental significant impacts to facilities or supplies will occur as a result.

Reconstruction/rehabilitation of the subject diversion structure will be subject to mitigation measures set forth in Section X of this IS/MND and any potential impacts to surface or groundwater, or to other environmental resources will be less than significant with this mitigation.

Wastewater
The reconstruction/rehabilitation Project will not generate any wastewater. It therefore will not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities, nor will it impact the available capacity of any wastewater treatment plants. There will be no impacts related to wastewater.

Stormwater Drainage
The Project proposes the rehabilitation/reconstruction of an existing diversion structure and replacement of a segment of the associated pipeline. The proposed replacement diversion structure will be the same size as the current facility and will be located in the exact same location. There will be no significant change to the existing drainage pattern or capacity. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Electricity
The proposed Project will not impact or have any effect on existing South California Edison facilities nor will it require power from the SCE grid.

Natural Gas
The Project will not use natural gas during construction or operations, nor will it require the relocation or construction of new or expanded natural gas facilities. There will be no impacts related to natural gas.

Telecommunications
The Project will not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded telecommunications facilities. Power poles carrying communication lines will not be affected by the proposed Project, and impacts to existing communication lines will be less than significant.

d, e) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed diversion structure reconstruction/rehabilitation and associated pipeline replacement Project will not generate solid waste during long-term operations. During construction of the proposed improvements, limited construction-related waste may be generated, including concrete, pipe and wood framing, which are recyclable. The generation of this waste would be limited and temporary, and would not exceed any State or local standards, nor would it be in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. All construction debris must be disposed of in accordance with local and state requirements, including those provided in the County of Riverside Integrate Waste Management Plan. The Project will also comply with all applicable federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Impacts will be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required

Monitoring and Reporting: None required

XX. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓	
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?		✓		
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?		✓		
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			✓	

Sources: Riverside County General Plan and Final EIR, 2016; Project materials; Google Earth Pro 7.3.3.7786; Fire Hazard Severity Map, CalFire, https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/, accessed March 2022;); CalFire FRAP and FHSZ map https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=31219c833eb54598ba83d09fa0adb346 (accessed August 2024); Project Plans prepared by ERSC, August 2024.

Setting

Wildfires can occur in undeveloped areas and spread to urban areas. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) has mapped areas of significant fire hazards in the state through its Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP). These maps identify fire hazard severity zones (FHSZ) based on a hazard scoring system using subjective criteria for fuels, fire history, terrain influences, housing density, and occurrence of severe weather where urban conflagration could occur.

The Riverside County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP) classifies the fire hazard in the Project area as high. According to Riverside County General Plan (Figure A-11), the subject site is in a State Responsibility Area and within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Nearby lands occur within a Federal Responsibility Area and are also designated as VHFHSZ. The Project proposes the in-situ reconstruction/rehabilitation of a diversion structure and construction of a segment of new underground pipeline. It does not propose the development of any residential buildings or other structures for human occupation. It therefore would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. As a matter of standard best management practices (BMPs) the Project will enforce a no-smoking rule in all portions of the construction zone, fueling areas and near combustible or flammable storage locations. On-site flammable liquids will be stored in approved containers. And the Project contractor shall initiate and enforce a good housekeeping policy to minimize accumulation of scrap and combustible debris. Fire-related construction site management are incorporated herein as mitigation measures.

Discussion of Impacts

a, b, d) Less Than Significant Impacts. The MJLHMP was updated in 2023, and includes priority actions to mitigate hazards, as well as actions to coordinate plans and resources in the event of an emergency. The proposed Project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. According to the MJLHMP, key evacuation routes in the Idyllwild area include Highways 243 and74. While construction activities associated with the Project could involve temporary access limitation along adjacent segments of Tahquitz Road and Fern Valley Road, there are alternatives routes out of the neighborhood and neither Fern Valley Road not Tahquitz Road are considered key evacuation routes. Furthermore, the construction would be temporary, and a construction access plan will be required by the District to ensure the Project does not interfere with emergency access during construction. Overall, impacts will be less than significant.

Project proposes the reconstruction/rehabilitation of an existing diversion structure and replacement of an above ground segment of water pipe with a new segment of underground pipe. The Project will not involve any residential buildings or other occupied structures. There will be no occupants potentially at risk of wildfire hazard. The diversion structure will maintain the existing drainage pattern, and therefore would not be expected to expose people or structures to significant risks as a result of drainage changes. Impacts will be less than significant.

c) The Project will not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) beyond that associated with the Project. With proper application of best management practices (BMPs) set forth as mitigation measures below the Project will not create conditions that that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation Measures:

WF-1 The Project contractor shall create a daily pre-task wildfire assessment tool including the following:

- Assessment and delineation of the Project work area,
- Identification of escape routes and muster points,
- Check and communicate short-term and long-term weather predictions for humidity levels, temperature, wind speed and direction

- Identify vegetation types and their current condition (i.e. dry) and terrain
- Identify proximity to closest staffed fire station and phone number for calls for assistance if needed.

WF-2 Clear brush and other combustible materials from immediate work area and pre-wet areas where there are known potential ignition sources.

WF-3 Ensure quick access to appropriate fire suppression hand tools and fire suppression equipment, including fire extinguishers, water trucks, and water tank trailers.

WF-4 Perform equipment checks to reduce potential for a malfunction that could create an ignition source. Lock out faulty equipment for repair prior to use onsite.

WF-5 Reduce run time of common ignition sources such as trucks, heavy equipment, generators and welders, using them only as much as needed to complete the job.

WF-6 Keep construction equipment and materials on vegetated, in fire prone areas of site as little as possible. This will reduce loss if the construction storage area is affected by nearby fire. This includes removing equipment during weekends or off work hours.

Monitoring and Reporting

WF-A Prior to issuance of authorization to proceed, the Project contractor shall provide the District with a fire prevention and suppression plan that implements the elements set forth in Mitigation Measures FW-1 through 6, and any other appropriate plans to prevent and suppress the outbreak of fire at the Project site.
Responsible Part: Project Contractor, District
Schedule: Prior to issuance of authorization to proceed.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		✓		
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively			✓	

considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?				
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✓		

a) Less than Significant with Mitigation.

Biological Resources:
As discussed in Section IV above, a biological resources assessment was conducted for the Project and adjacent lands, which are comprised primarily of single-family residences, vacation cabins and small mountain resorts and outbuildings, and local streets. The neighborhood is comprised of wooded forest lands.

No special status or sensitive plant or animal species were found or suspected on occupying the Project site or vicinity. As previously noted, the subject lands and the community are located within the development impact mitigation fee area of the West County MSHCP. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires the conducting of pre-construction nesting bird surveys if construction is planned during the February 1 through August 31 nest season.

Therefore, the Project will not 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.

Cultural Resources:
As discussed in detail in Section V and XVIII of this IS/MND, the Project site is not expected to harbor either sensitive cultural or historic resources. Mitigation Measure CUL-1 requires that if potential resources are identified during site disturbance, work shall be halted in that area and a qualified professional will be called in to evaluate and, if necessary, mitigate the find prior to continued work at that location. Therefore, the Project is not expected to eliminate or significantly impact important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) Less than Significant Impact.

The Project is not expected to result in any impacts that are or may be considered to be cumulatively considerable. The Project is limited to the reconstruction/rehabilitation of an existing and long-established creek diversion structure located within the Strawberry Creek drainage. It also includes the removal of an existing above-ground pipeline and the installation of approximately 700 feet of underground pipeline on an adjoining residential lot and within the paved section of Fern Valley Road. Once reconstruction and pipeline installation work has been completed, the creek bed and pipeline alignment will be left essentially in the same condition as it was before the Project is implemented. Revegetation of the disturbed portions of the pipeline alignment will occur naturally. No cumulatively considerable impacts are expected to result from implementation of the Project.

c) Less than Significant with Mitigation.

There is a limited and less than significant risk that implementation of the proposed Project will result in or cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The diversion structure reconstruction project will rehabilitate the existing structure and provide a continuous underground pipeline connection to the IWD water system. Construction will be conducted under the supervision of the District and is not expected to adversely impact local residents or the traveling public.

Appendix A

CalEEMOD Air Quality and GHG Modeling

(Available on District website:
https://www.idyllwildwater.com/public-hearing-notices**)**

Appendix B

Biological Resources Assessment Report

(Available on District website:
https://www.idyllwildwater.com/public-hearing-notices**)**

Appendix C

Cultural Resources Survey/Report
CONFIDENTIAL

Reviewers wishing to review this report must contact the Project CEQA Planner, John Criste, at the following email address: jcriste@terranovaplanning.com.

Only qualified professionals can be provided a copy of this report."

Appendix D

Jurisdictional Delineation
For the
Strawberry Creek Diversion Reconstruction Project

(Available on District website:
https://www.idyllwildwater.com/public-hearing-notices**)**