Alessandro Ponds Phase II Optimization

Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

Lead Agency:

Eastern Municipal Water District

2270 Trumble Road

Perris, CA 92570

September 2026

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Prepared for:

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September 2026

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
APN	Assessor Parcel Number
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMP	Best Management Practices
BRA	Biological Resources Assessment
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CO2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CY	cubic yards
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EMWD	Eastern Municipal Water District
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
IS	Initial Study
Leq	equivalent continuous sound level
LOS	Level of Service
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MSHCP	Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan
MT	metric tons
MT CO2e	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
ND	Negative Declaration
NO2	nitrogen dioxide
NOX	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O&M	operation and maintenance
OPR	Office of Planning and Research
Pb	lead
PI	Public Institution
PM10	particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter
PM2.5	particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter
ppb	parts per billion
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PVC	polyvinyl chloride
RCFC	Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
SB	Senate Bill
SCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SO2	sulfur dioxide
SOX	oxides of sulfur
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCR	tribal cultural resource
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WEAP	worker environmental awareness program

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared in accordance with relevant provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended, and the CEQA Guidelines, as revised. Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) has prepared this IS/MND to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed Alessandro Ponds Optimization Phase II Project (Proposed Project), which is designed to improve existing recycled water storage facilities. Because the Proposed Project requires discretionary approval by EMWD and has the potential to result in environmental impacts, it is subject to environmental review under CEQA.

1.1 Purpose of this Document

EMWD has prepared this IS to determine if the Proposed Project could have significant impacts on the environment. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared if there is substantial evidence that a project may have significant impacts on the environment. If the lead agency for the CEQA process determines that there is no substantial evidence for such impacts, or if the potential impacts can be reduced through revisions to the project description or the addition of mitigation measures, a Negative Declaration (ND) or MND can be prepared.

EMWD has determined that with the incorporation of mitigation measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs), the implementation of the Proposed Project would not have significant impacts on the environment and that an IS/MND is the appropriate document for compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

1.2 Scope of this Document

This IS/MND has been prepared in accordance with CEQA (as amended) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.), as updated on December 28, 2018. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 describes the requirements for an IS and Sections 15070–15075 describe the process for the preparation of an MND. Where appropriate, this document refers to either the CEQA Statute or State CEQA Guidelines (as amended in December 2018).

The IS/MND evaluates the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and includes the following components:

- A detailed project description.
- The CEQA IS Checklist, which provides standards to evaluate the potential for significant environmental impacts from the Proposed Project and is adapted from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The Proposed Project is evaluated in 21 environmental issue categories,

listed in **Section 3.1**, to determine whether the Proposed Project's environmental impacts may be significant in any category. Brief discussions are provided that further substantiate the Proposed Project's anticipated environmental impacts in each category.

- An MND that presents the findings of the CEQA IS Checklist in making the determination that with the incorporation of mitigation measures, the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to the environment.
- Mitigation measures for any significant effects.
- Consistency with plans and policies.
- Names of preparers

1.3 Impact Terminology

Impact terminology used in this IS/MND is based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The following definitions are used to describe the level of significance of environmental impacts:

- **No Impact**: The project would not result in any impact to the resource or issue area.
- **Less Than Significant Impact**: The project would result in impacts that are minor and do not require mitigation.
- **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**: The project could result in potentially significant impacts; however, implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Potentially Significant Impact**: The project could result in a significant adverse impact on the environment, and mitigation may be required to reduce the impact.

1.4 CEQA Process

This IS/MND has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA (PRC Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (CCR Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq). The CEQA process is intended to inform decision-makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of the proposed projects and to identify ways to avoid or reduce significant impacts.

The environmental review process includes preparation of an IS/MND to evaluate environmental impacts. This document will be circulated for a 30-day public review period, during which responsible agencies and members of the public may review the document and provide comments.

Following the public review period, EMWD will consider all comments received and may revise the document as appropriate. EMWD's Board will then determine whether to adopt the MND and

approve the Proposed Project. If adopted, a Notice of Determination will be filed in accordance with CEQA requirements.

EMWD will circulate the Draft IS/MND to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies for a 30-day public review period. In addition, EMWD will circulate a Notice of Intent to Adopt a MND to the Riverside County Clerk, responsible agencies, and interested entities. A copy of the Draft IS/MND will be available for a 30-day public review at: https://www.emwd.org/public-notice.

Written comments can be submitted to EMWD by 5:00 p.m. on Friday October 30 and addressed to:

Martha Vilchis, Water Resources Specialist Associate I
Eastern Municipal Water District
2270 Trumble Road
P.O. Box 8300 Perris, CA 92572-8300
vilchism@emwd.org

Following the 30-day public review period, EMWD will evaluate all comments received on the Draft IS/MND and incorporate any substantial evidence that the Proposed Project could have an impact on the environment into the Final IS/MND and prepare a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).

The IS/MND and MMRP will be considered for adoption by the EMWD Board of Directors in compliance with CEQA at a future publicly noticed hearing. Hearings are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at EMWD's headquarters.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Overview

The Alessandro Ponds are an active recycled water storage facility operated by EMWD located near the intersection of West Ramona Expressway and Alessandro Avenue North in the City of San Jacinto and unincorporated Riverside County. EMWD's Strategic Priority is to implement on-going treatment, storage and distribution system projects and programs to allow 100 percent utilization of recycled water for the highest beneficial and sustainable uses possible EMWD uses the ponds to store recycled water that is produced by the San Jacinto Valley Regional Water Reclamation Facility . Excess recycled water is stored in winter when there is less demand for irrigation and pumped out of the ponds during the summer when irrigation demands increase. EMWD is advancing the Proposed Project which would increase the water storage capacity of three ponds through deepening and expansion of the ponds, and raising of the berms surrounding them. The increase in storage capacity is necessary to address increasing recycled water supplies and irrigation demands. The pond-side of the berms, which are currently subject to wave action erosion, would also be stabilized with the addition of a soil-cement surface.

2.2 Project Location

The Proposed Project is located on 37.8 acres partially in the City of San Jacinto, California and partially in unincorporated Riverside County (**Figure 2-1**), within the EMWD service area. The Project Site is located within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) San Jacinto quadrangle, Township 4 South, Range 1 West, and consists of Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 433070018, 433070019, 433070020, 433070021, and 433070031. The Project Site is accessed from Olmstead Avenue, a dirt road north of West Ramona Expressway (**Figure 2-2**). The Project Site is bounded by Alta Nursery (wholesale plant nursery) and undeveloped land to the west, the San Jacinto River levee on the northeast, undeveloped land to the east, and by West Ramona Expressway to the south (**Figure 2-3**).

2.3 Project Summary

The Proposed Project would increase the water storage capacity of the recycled water facility from approximately 172 acre-feet to 369 acre-feet. Ponds 1, 2, and 3 would be expanded as depicted on **Figure 2-4**. The bottom of Pond 1 would be excavated approximately one foot deeper through the removal of soil. The bottoms of Ponds 2 and 3 would be excavated approximately 6 to 9 feet deeper. The height of the berms lining each pond would be raised approximately 3 to 5 feet using soil excavated from the ponds. The berms would also be stabilized with the addition of soil-cement laid on the pond-facing slopes. Pond 3 would be expanded approximately 100 feet northeast towards Ponds 1 and 2. To do this, a soil stockpile currently located in this area would be removed. Approximately 120,400 cubic yards (CY) of soil would be exported off-site during

construction of the Proposed Project. The design and construction of the facilities would be based on a soils report and geotechnical investigation to minimize geological risk (**Appendix A**).

Raising and re-grading of the berm along the northeasterly edge of Pond 1A, Pond 1, and Pond 2 may require the temporary removal of the existing fence along the property line, and access onto the adjacent Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFC) property. RCFC's property includes the San Jacinto River Levee. Access is only proposed in the area between the property line and base of the levee. No access or construction activities would occur on the levee or water side of the river.

To facilitate the expansion of Pond 3, EMWD has submitted a request to Riverside County to vacate an existing public right-of-way for New York Avenue. The road was never developed on the Project Site or adjacent properties and vacating the right-of-way would not affect access in the area.

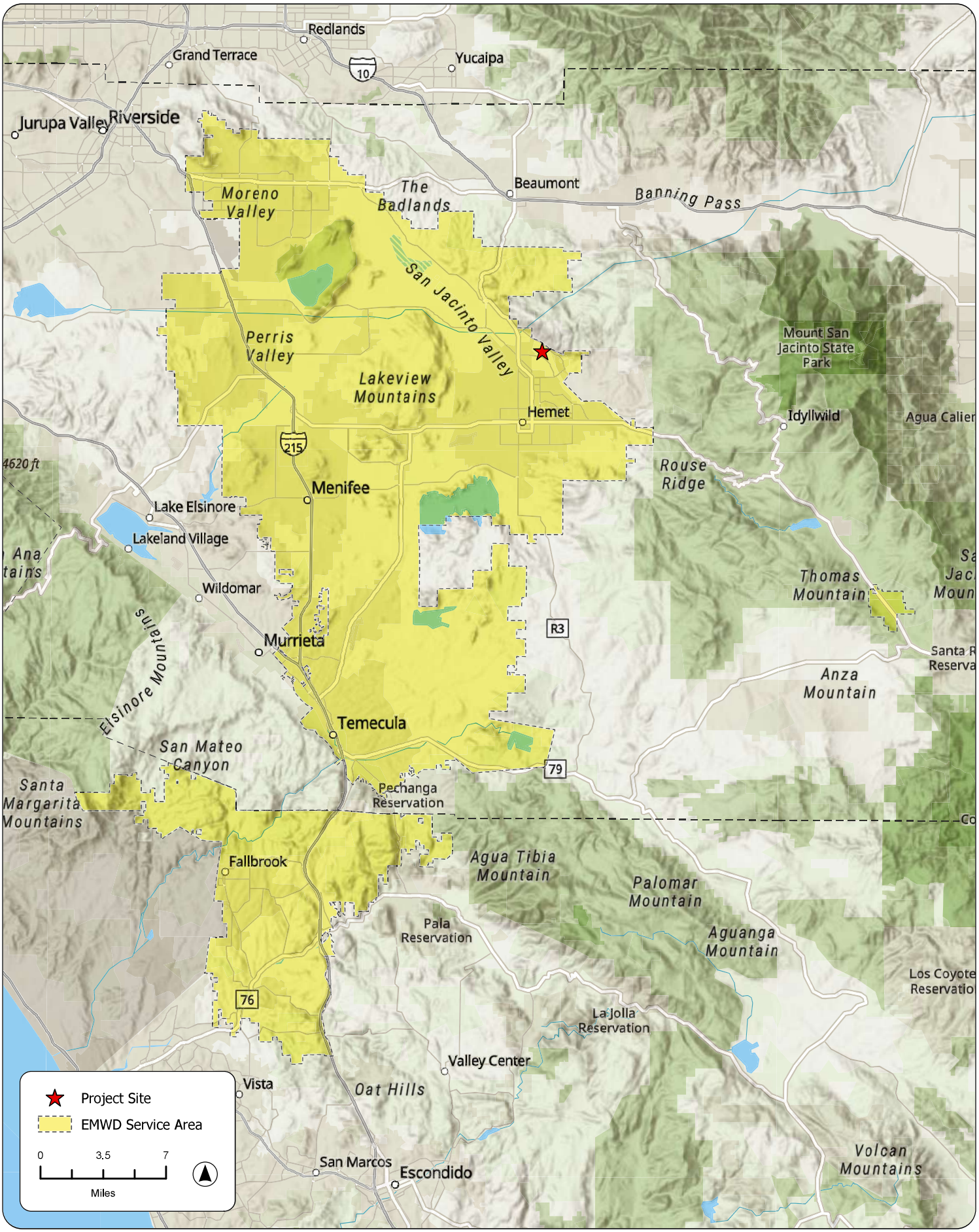
2.4 Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to begin in 2027 and take approximately 18 months to complete. Construction would be during daylight hours on weekdays. No construction is anticipated to occur during the night and no blasting would be needed. All construction staging is anticipated to occur within the Project Site with the exception of hauling trucks staging along Ramona Expressway during the export hauling operation. The Proposed Project is anticipated to require the construction equipment provided in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Construction Equipment

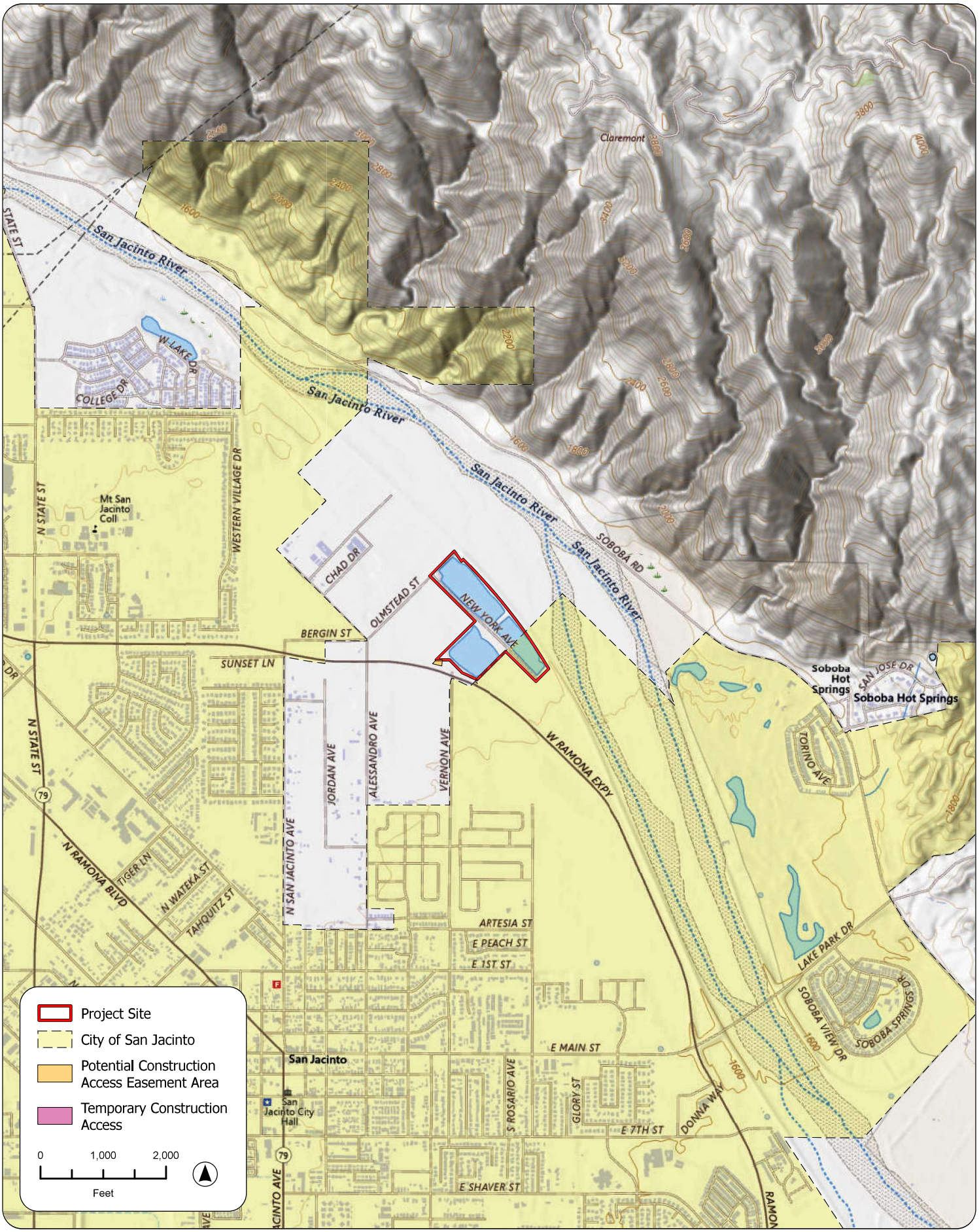
Equipment	Numbers
Backhoe/Loader	2
Excavator	2
Utility Truck	1
Water Truck	1
Pump	1
Pick-Up Trucks	3
Scraper	2-3
Grader	1
Dozer	2
Roller	1
Drill Rig	1
Soil-Cement Batch Plant	1

Source: EMWD Field Engineering, 2026.



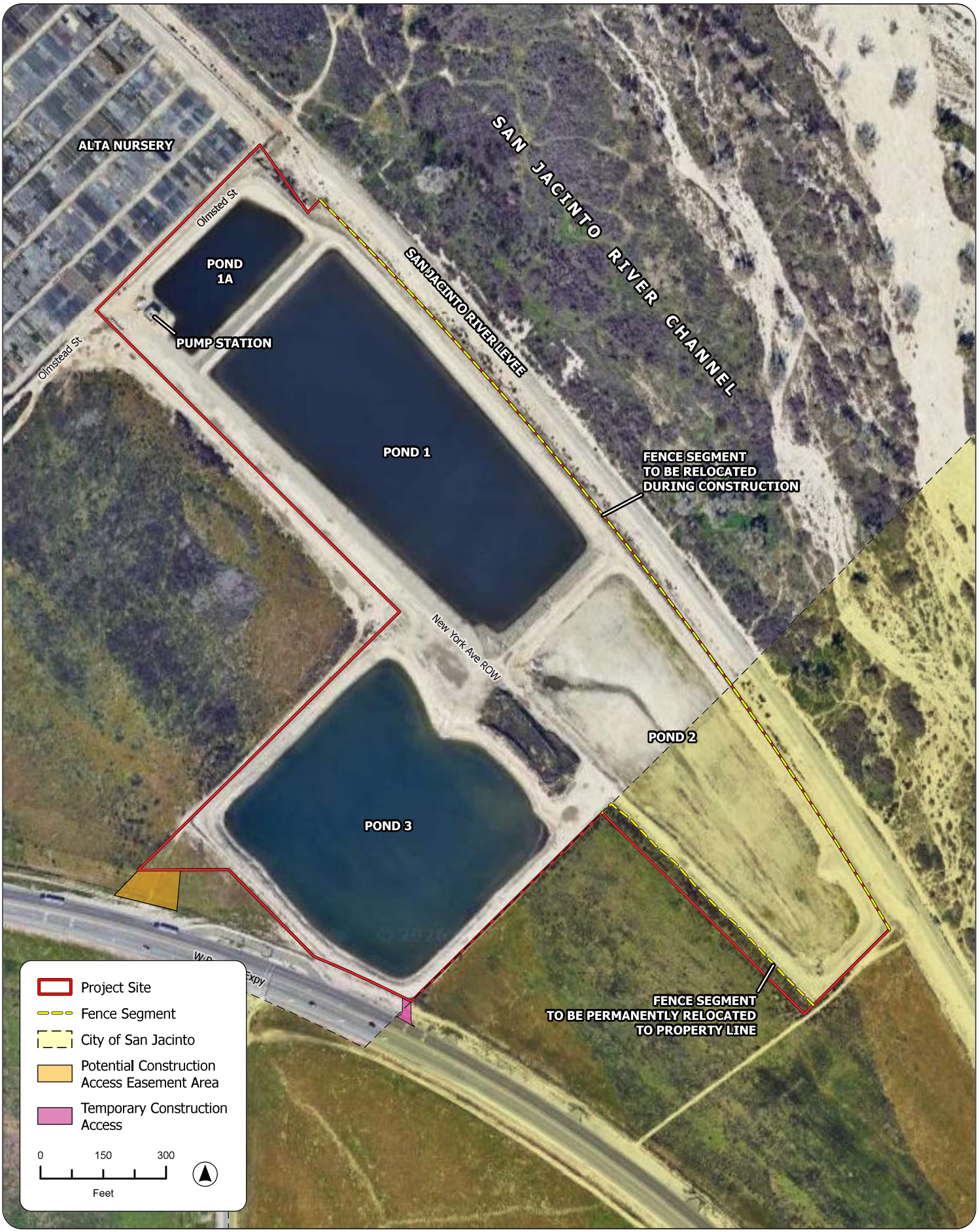
SOURCE: ESRI, 2026; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 5/6/2026

Figure 2-1
Regional Location



SOURCE: "San Jacinto, CA" USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle, T4S R1W, Sections 23, 24, 25, & 26, San Bernardino Baseline & Meridian; ESRI, 2026; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 7/2/2026

Figure 2-2
Site and Vicinity



SOURCE: ESRI, 2026; Vivid Aerial Photograph, 10/7/2025; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 9/21/2026

Figure 2-3
Aerial Overview



SOURCE: ESRI, 2026; Google Earth Aerial Photograph, 8/12/2024; Alessandro Ponds Optimization Phase II Grading Plan Cozad & Fox, Inc., 1/5/2026; EMWD, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 9/21/2026

Figure 2-4
Site Plan

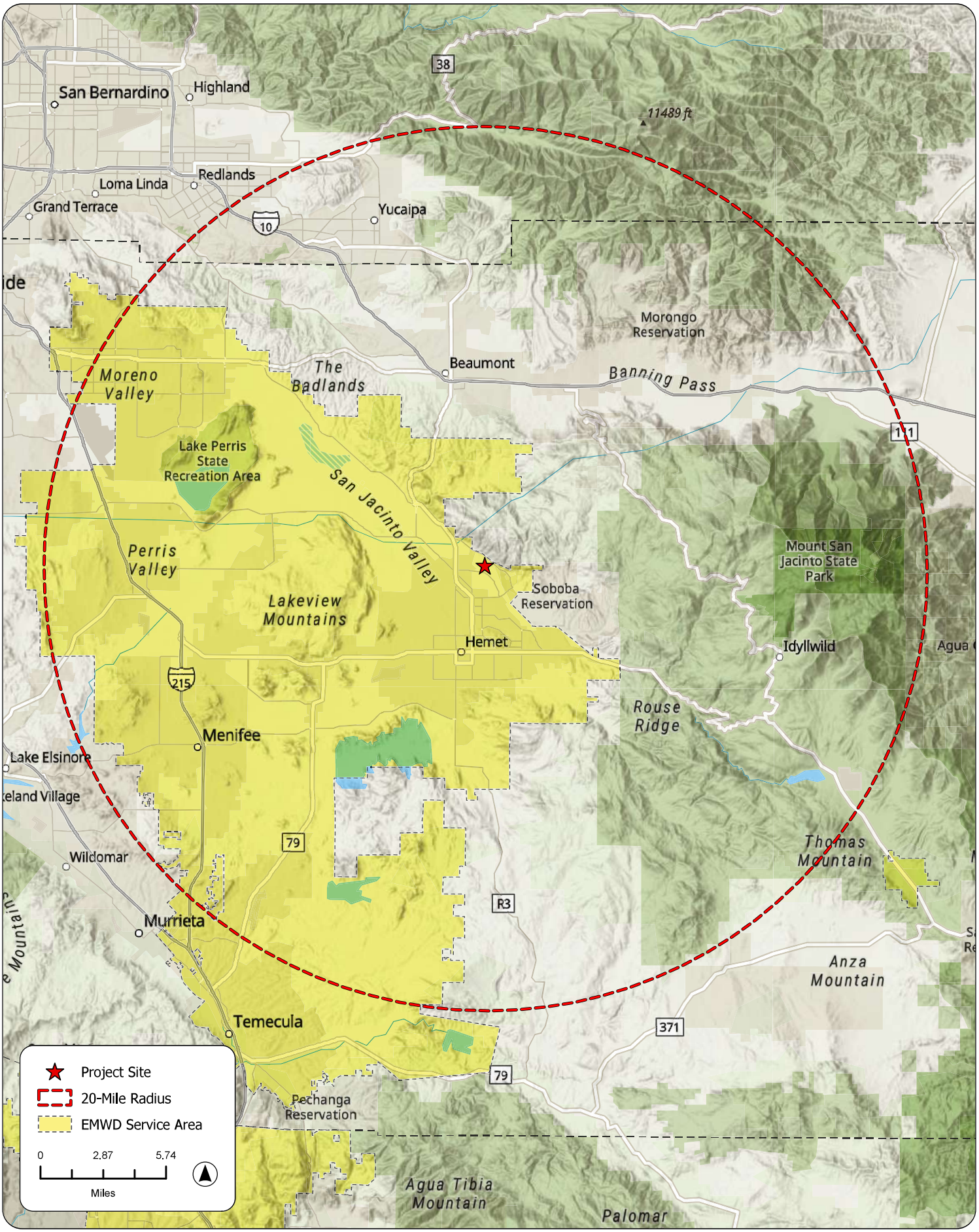
Pond Deepening and Soil Export

Excavation of the ponds would require the export of approximately 120,400 CY of soil. While no specific site(s) are identified at this point to receive the soil, it is expected that numerous sites could be available within 20 miles of the Project Site (see **Figure 2-5**). The hauling contractor would be responsible for obtaining any required permits by the affected jurisdiction. This would include a Transportation Permit issued by Riverside County, the City of San Jacinto, and any other affected municipalities. Each local agency would review specific haul routes prior to approval to minimize impacts on schools and other sensitive land uses. It is expected that the haul trucks would primarily use designated truck routes. Within the vicinity of the Project Site, these routes include Ramona Expressway, Lake Park Drive, North State Street, and North Sanderson Avenue. Should any soil be used on construction sites, they would be subject to land use regulations of the municipality with jurisdiction. If no construction sites are available to accept the soil, the soil would be hauled to the Lamb Canyon Landfill north of San Jacinto, which accepts uncontaminated fill (Prued, 2026).

Excavation and export of soil could occur over an 18-month period. Soil export is expected to generate an average of approximately 20 "round" trips per day, which equates to approximately 40 "one-way" trips per day, or approximately 5 trips per hour during workdays. In addition, approximately 35 daily one-way personal vehicle trips would be generated by construction workers commuting to and from the Project Site[1].

Prior to construction, recycled water from all ponds would be drained and conveyed via existing recycled water pipelines for storage at other EMWD recycled water storage facilities, such as Met Ponds, Ski Land Lake, or Winchester Ponds. Dewatering is expected to be required to facilitate excavation of saturated soils beneath the ponds. Groundwater would be pumped to a settling tank (e.g., Baker Tank) before being reused on site to assist with soil compaction or dust control, pumped to Pond 1A, and/or discharged to an EMWD sewer adjacent to the site. The closest sewer manhole is located approximately 75 feet from Pond 3 within a paved path east of the intersection of West Ramona Expressway and North Vernon Avenue. Groundwater would not be discharged to any wetland or stream.

[1] Trips based on default assumptions used in CalEEMod, which includes 16 CY per haul (dump) truck, and 1.25 round construction worker trips per piece of off-road equipment. The list of construction equipment is provided in Table 2-1.



SOURCE: ESRI, 2026; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 5/6/2026

Figure 2-5
20-Mile Radius

Berm Raising and Stabilization

The pond berms would be raised 3 to 5 feet each using soil excavated from the ponds. The pond-facing slopes of the berms would be reinforced through the application of soil-cement. A small concrete batch plant would be used on site during construction to mix a blend of soil and cement. This soil-cement blend would be laid on the pond-facing slopes to prevent erosion.

Pipeline Replacement

Several existing on-site pipelines dating from the 1950s through 1970s would be removed or abandoned if conflicting with the Proposed Project. The abandoned pipelines left in place would be slurry sealed or filled with cellular concrete.

The Proposed Project includes installation of new polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipelines throughout the site to improve inter-pond water transfer and pond fill. The pipelines range in size from 8 to 20 inches in diameter and would be installed within the limits of the Project Site. The pipelines would be installed up to approximately six feet below the existing ground surface via open-cut trenching.

Monitoring Wells

Two existing monitoring wells on site would be retained and adjusted vertically in place, including raising the wellheads as necessary to accommodate the proposed finished grade. The adjustment would not involve night drilling.

Construction Access

Access to the Project Site would be provided by a temporary construction entrance located directly off West Ramona Expressway. The construction entrance would be located at the southern corner of Pond 3 as shown in **Figure 2-4**. The entrance would be constructed as a stabilized entrance with aggregate and steel panels to minimize the track-out of soil on the public roadway. The entrance would be gated to control access to construction vehicles. At the completion of construction, the existing boundary fence and affected area would be restored to pre-construction conditions. If a second temporary construction entrance is required, it would be developed at the southwestern corner of Pond 3 and would be developed as described above. If this second entrance is needed, the contractor would be required to obtain a temporary construction access easement over private property within the area shown in **Figure 2-4**.

2.5 Operation and Maintenance

Once constructed, the Proposed Project is anticipated to have the same level of operation and maintenance (O&M) activities as the existing ponds, which includes:

- Daily visits by operations staff to monitor or adjust water levels in the ponds, assess algae/weed buildup in the ponds, and do daily checks on the pump station and associated components;
- Annual mowing of the pond bottoms and maintenance of roads and slopes if necessary;
- As needed vermin abatement, weed spray, tumbleweed removal, fence repair, trash/dumping removal.

No new employees would be required for O&M.

2.6 Environmental Commitments

EMWD maintains standard construction specifications, practices and procedures for incorporation into the design and construction of all EMWD projects. The following standard construction specifications, practices, and procedures, would be implemented as part of the Proposed Project:

- All construction work would require the contractor to implement fire hazard reduction measures, such as having fire extinguishers located on-site, use of spark arrestors on equipment, and using a spotter during welding activities.
- Construction would be subject to the rules and regulations of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD rules applicable to the Proposed Project may include the following:
    - Rule 201, Permit to Construct. This rule requires a permit prior to the construction, installation, or relocation of applicable equipment that may emit air contaminants.
    - Rule 203, Permit to Operate. This rule requires applicable equipment that may emit air contaminants to obtain a SCAQMD Permit to Operate prior to operation.
    - Rule 401, Visible Emissions. This rule establishes the limit for visible emissions from stationary sources.
    - Rule 402, Nuisance. This rule prohibits the discharge of air pollutants from a facility that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to the public or damage to business or property.
    - Rule 403, Fugitive Dust. This rule requires fugitive dust sources to implement best available control measures for all sources and prohibits all forms of visible particulate matter from crossing any property line. SCAQMD Rule 403 is intended to reduce particulate matter (PM_{10}) emissions from any transportation, handling, construction, or storage activity that has the potential to generate fugitive dust.

  - Rule 431.2, Sulfur Content of Liquid Fuels. The purpose of this rule is to limit the sulfur content in diesel and other liquid fuels for the purpose of reducing the formation of oxides of sulfur (SO_X) and particulates during combustion and to enable the use of add-on control devices for diesel-fueled internal combustion engines. The rule applies to all refiners, importers, and other fuel suppliers such as distributors, marketers, and retailers, as well as to users of diesel, low-sulfur diesel, and other liquid fuels for stationary-source applications in the SCAQMD. The rule also affects diesel fuel supplied for mobile sources.
  - Rule 1110.2, Emissions from Gaseous- and Liquid-Fueled Engines. This rule applies to stationary and portable engines rated at greater than 50 horsepower. The purpose of Rule 1110.2 is to reduce nitrogen oxides (NO_X), volatile organic compound (VOC), and CO emissions from engines. Emergency engines, including those powering standby generators, are generally exempt from the emissions and monitoring requirements of this rule because they have permit conditions that limit operation to 200 hours or less per year as determined by an elapsed operating time meter.

- Specifications would require the contractor to implement standard fire prevention measures. EMWD Specifications Detailed Provisions Section 02201 – Construction Methods & Earthwork of the Standard Detailed Provisions (EMWD, 2015) include the entire work and site, including storage areas, are inspected at frequent intervals to verify that fire prevention measures are constantly enforced; fully charged fire extinguishers of the appropriate type, supplemented with temporary fire hoses wherever an adequate water supply exists, are furnished and maintained; and flammable materials are stored in a manner that prevents spontaneous combustion or dispersion.
- Specifications would require the contractor to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The contractor would implement BMPs to control water quality of stormwater discharges offsite, according to the SWPPP, such as site management "housekeeping," erosion control, sediment control, tracking control and wind erosion control.
- The contractor would be required to comply with all relevant and applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the transport, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and waste during construction of proposed facilities.
- The construction contractor would have a Traffic Control and Detour Plan approved in accordance with US Department of Transportation Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and local City and County traffic control requirements. The

contractor would provide the construction schedule and Traffic Control and Detour Plan to the City and County for review and approval as part of the Encroachment Permit process to ensure that construction of the Proposed Project does not conflict with other construction projects that may be occurring simultaneously in the vicinity.

- Compliance with Title 22 of the CCR and Hazardous Waste Control Law.
- The contractor would adhere to the following requirements to reduce construction noise to the extent feasible:
    - Construction activities would comply with the applicable construction hours identified within the City of San Jacinto Development Code, Section 8.40.090, and County of Riverside Ordinance 847 and would only occur during daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.
    - Stationary noise-generating equipment shall be located as far from sensitive receptors as possible. Such equipment shall also be oriented to minimize noise that would be directed toward sensitive receptors. Whenever possible, other non-noise generating equipment (e.g., roll-off dumpsters) shall be positioned between the noise source and sensitive receptors.
    - Equipment and staging areas shall be located as far from sensitive receptors as possible. At the staging location, equipment and materials shall be kept as far from adjacent sensitive receptors as possible.
    - Construction vehicles and equipment shall be maintained in the best possible working order; operated by an experienced, trained operator; and shall utilize the best available noise control techniques (including mufflers, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds).
    - Unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines shall be prohibited. In practice, this would require turning off equipment if it would idle for five or more minutes.
    - Electrically powered equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment, where feasible.
    - The use of noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells, shall be for safety warning purposes only.
- Compliance with the Division of Occupational Safety and Health of California Construction Safety Plan/Hazard Communication Program.

- Compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1910.120: Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, which regulates safety for employees handling hazardous substances, conducting cleanups, or responding to emergencies.
- Compliance with Riverside County Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion Program and City of San Jacinto's Construction and Demolition Waste Management requirements, as applicable.

2.7 Required Permits and Approvals

This IS/MND is intended to serve as the CEQA document for all actions associated with the Proposed Project. In addition, this IS/MND is the reference document for the formulation and implementation of a MMRP for the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project may require approvals, permits, or authorization from other agencies, classified as "Responsible Agencies" under CEQA. According to Section 15381 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Responsible Agency is defined as a public agency other than the Lead Agency that will have discretionary approval power over the Proposed Project or some component of the Proposed Project, including mitigation. Section 15379 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a "public agency" as "…any state agency, board, or commission and any local or regional agency…" It goes on to state that the term public agency "…does not include agencies of the federal government." Permitting/Responsible Agencies include, but are not limited to, the agencies identified in **Table 2-2**, Probable Future Actions by Responsible Agencies. No federal approvals are needed for the Proposed Project.

Table 2-2: Responsible/Permitting Agency required Permits and Approvals

Permit/Approval	Agency	Permit/Approval Trigger
Encroachment Permit	Riverside County and/or City of San Jacinto	Construction access to site from Ramona Expressway
Encroachment Permit	Riverside County Flood Control	Temporary fence removal and site access during construction, if necessary
Permit to Construct/Operate for Temporary Generator	SCAQMD	Temporary emissions from generator(s) for small batch plant and office trailer
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit	State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)	Required prior to construction
Haul/Transportation Permits	City of San Jacinto; Riverside County; possibly others	Required for soil export off-site
Right-of-Way Vacation	Riverside County	Required for vacation of New York Ave

3.0 PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

3.1 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/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

3.2 Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

Anthony Budicin Digitally signed by Anthony Budicin Date: 2026.09.24 14:17:36 -07'00'

Signature

9/24/2026

Date

Anthony Budicin

Printed Name

Director of Env. & Reg. Comp.

Title

4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.1 Aesthetics

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock, outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) In nonurbanized 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could substantially alter the visual character of the Project Site and surrounding area. The analysis considers potential effects on scenic vistas and scenic resources, as well as changes associated with new sources of light or glare. These issues are evaluated because project-related changes to the visual environment may affect public views and the character of nearby communities and landscapes.

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

The Project Site is located near the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountains and the San Jacinto River channel is immediately north of the site behind a flood control levee. The Project Site is mostly surrounded by open space and agricultural land, with a plant nursery to the west. There are residential land uses located approximately 0.4 miles to the south and southwest of the Project Site. The river is considered a scenic resource for the San Jacinto Valley, although due to the existing levee there are no existing views of the river from public vantages south of the Project Site where motorists travel; therefore, the Proposed Project would not impact views of the river channel. Ramona Expressway, along the southern Project Site boundary, is considered a County eligible scenic highway according to the San Jacinto Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside, 2021). Scenic highways provide motorists with a view of distinctive natural characteristics that are not typical of other areas in the County. The intent of the general plan policies is to conserve significant scenic resources along scenic highways. The scenic resource along Ramona Expressway is the San Jacinto Mountains. The Proposed Project would raise the berms of the ponds up to five feet and would not impede views of the mountain range. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

There are no officially designated State Scenic Highways within the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. The Project Site is not visible from any State Scenic Highways. The closest officially designated scenic highways to the project site are State Highway 74, located 7.4 miles southeast, and State Highway 243, located 7.5 miles northeast. The official designation for State Route 74 begins at the west boundary of the San Bernardino National Forest (Caltrans, 2026). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially damage any scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

c) In nonurbanized 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?

The Project Site is mostly outside of urbanized areas and is surrounded by open space and natural lands to the north, east, and south, with a plant nursery to the west. A majority of the Proposed Project would occur at ground level, with the only component that could alter the visual character or quality of public views being the repair and raising of the existing berms. Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project (e.g., presence of construction vehicles, excavated materials, laydown areas) would create short-term visual effects for the motorists along Ramona Expressway. However, the ponds are existing and the Proposed Project would not significantly alter the existing visual character in the vicinity. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not adversely affect the quality of public views of the Project Site and its surroundings.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

Construction of the Proposed Project would be limited to daytime hours, Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. following a "good-neighbor" policy. No night construction or lighting would occur. Further, the Proposed Project would not include the installation of any permanent lighting or reflective material. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could result in the conversion or loss of agricultural or forestry resources. The analysis considers the presence of designated farmland, agricultural zoning or land conservation contracts, forestland, timberland, and other conditions that could contribute to the conversion of these resources to non-agricultural or non-forestry uses. These issues are evaluated because agricultural and forestry lands provide important economic, environmental, and land-use benefits and may be difficult to replace once converted.

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?

The Project Site is designated as Urban and Built-up Land by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (California Department of Conservation [DOC], 2026). The increase in seasonal storage produced by the project would ensure reliable summer irrigation supply to existing agricultural uses utilizing recycled water and support new agricultural uses. Construction of the Proposed Project would occur within the Project Site on EMWD land. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses and there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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

The Project Site is located partially within the City of San Jacinto and partially within unincorporated Riverside County. The Project Site is zoned as Public Institution (PI) and has a land use designation of Public Institution in the City General Plan and is zoned as Heavy Agriculture (A-2) in the County, although the EMWD facilities have been in place for more than 40 years and under Government Code Section 53091 public water districts are exempt from local ordinances when constructing core water and wastewater facilities (City of San Jacinto, 2026; County of Riverside, 2026). The Project Site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract. Surrounding property would not be precluded from agricultural uses, nor are they subject to a Williamson Act contract. The temporary access easement located immediately west of Pond 3 along Ramona Expressway is not currently farmed and would be returned to existing conditions following construction of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project maintains a pre-existing use and would not conflict with any Williamson Act contracts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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))?

The Project Site does not contain any forest or timberland as defined by PRC Section 12220[g], PRC Section 4526, or Government Code Section 51104(g) and is not zoned as forest or timberland. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with zoning for forest land or timberland and there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The Project Site does not contain any forest or timberland as defined by PRC Section 12220[g], PRC Section 4526, or Government Code Section 51104(g). The Proposed Project would therefore not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No impact.

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?

There are no active agricultural uses or forestlands on-site or in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in conversion of farmland or forest land. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.3 Air Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The detailed air quality analysis presented in **Appendix B**, including the regulatory framework, environmental setting, methodology, and full impact analysis, is incorporated herein by reference. The discussion below provides a summary of impacts.

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

The Project Site is located within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) under the jurisdiction of the SCAQMD. Air districts are tasked with regulating emissions to ensure that air quality in the SCAB does not exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) or California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). NAAQS and CAAQS represent the maximum levels of background pollution considered safe, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health and welfare. NAAQS and CAAQS have been established for six common pollutants of concern known as criteria pollutants, which include ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), lead (Pb), and PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. The SCAQMD portion of the County where the Project Site is located is currently designated nonattainment for State ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ standards. Furthermore, it is designated serious nonattainment for federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards, extreme nonattainment for federal ozone standards, and attainment (maintenance) for federal CO, NO_X, and PM_{10} standards.

The SCAQMD 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) serves as the applicable air quality plan for the region and is intended to attain the 2015 8-hour ozone standard of 70 parts per billion (ppb) (SCAQMD, 2022). As such, inconsistency with the 2022 AQMP would be considered a cumulatively adverse air quality impact. Consistency with the AQMP is evaluated based on whether a project complies with applicable SCAQMD rules and regulations and aligns with regional growth projections used in the AQMP, which are based on population, housing, and employment forecasts. The Proposed Project involves expansion of an existing recycled water facility and would not induce population growth, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with growth projections contained in the County's General Plan and the AQMP. Based on these considerations, and pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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?

The SCAQMD portion of the County where the Project Site is located is currently in nonattainment for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ State standards. The SCAQMD establishes significance thresholds to assess the regional impact of project-related air pollutant emissions in the SCAQMD, presented in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: SCAQMD Air Quality Thresholds of Significance (Construction)

Criteria Pollutant	Emissions Threshold (pounds/day)
NO_X	100
VOC	75
PM_{10}	150
$PM_{2.5}$	55
SO_X	150
CO	550
Lead	3

Source: SCAQMD, 2023

Project-specific emissions that exceed SCAQMD thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants would be expected to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the County is in nonattainment under applicable federal or state ambient air quality standards.

Construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to begin in 2027 and last for up to 18 months. The Proposed Project would result in construction emissions during pond deepening and soil export, berm raising, and pipeline replacement; however, these emissions would be temporary and limited in scale. The Proposed Project's construction emissions would include those associated with off-road heavy equipment operation, worker vehicle commutes, and haul truck activity for the export of approximately 120,400 CY of excavated soil. The Proposed Project would include temporary use of a soil-cement batch plant and associated generator during construction. In accordance with SCAQMD Rules 201 and 203, a Permit to Construct and a Permit to Operate would be obtained for the batch plant prior to operation, and the equipment would be operated in accordance with applicable permit requirements. Results of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) analysis are summarized in **Table 4-2** and further detailed in **Appendix B**. Construction emissions generated by the Proposed Project would be less than the

applicable SCAQMD thresholds for criteria pollutants. Therefore, construction impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4-2: Project Construction Emissions (pounds./day)

Summary Report	NO_X	VOC	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
2027	46.97	5.16	48.67	0.12	19.94	9.17
2028	45.01	5.06	48.33	0.12	19.85	9.09
Maximum Daily Emissions	**46.97**	**5.16**	**48.67**	**0.12**	**19.94**	**9.17**
SCAQMD Threshold	*100*	*75*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: **Appendix B**

After construction activities are complete, the Proposed Project is anticipated to have the same level of O&M activities as the existing ponds. Therefore, the Proposed Project is not expected to generate increased levels of operational emissions beyond existing conditions, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project Site are residences located approximately 0.24 miles west of Pond 3 and the Rose-Salgado Elementary School located approximately 0.27 miles south of Pond 3. A residential community is located immediately to the south of the school, approximately 0.38 miles south of Pond 3. During construction, sensitive receptors may be affected by the temporary generation of fugitive dust emissions. Compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403, which requires implementation of fugitive dust control measures during construction and is enforced by SCAQMD staff, would ensure no significant dust emission impacts occur to nearby sensitive receptors. As discussed in **Impact b)**, the Proposed Project's construction and operational emissions are below SCAQMD thresholds of significance for all criteria air pollutants and would not result in a significant impact to nearby sensitive receptors.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Construction-related activities could result in the generation of toxic air contaminants (TACs), specifically diesel particulate matter (DPM), from haul trucks and off-road equipment exhaust emissions that have the potential to affect nearby sensitive receptors. However, construction would be temporary, lasting only 18 months, which is a relatively short duration compared to the long-term exposure periods (e.g., 30 years or more) typically associated with health risk impacts from TACs. Equipment utilized during construction would be required to comply with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation, which limits idling times and mandates construction fleets reduce emissions by phasing out older high-emitting diesel vehicles, thereby reducing emissions of DPM. Further, because construction equipment would operate intermittently and in different locations, DPM emissions would not be concentrated in one area or persist for extended time periods. Given the temporary nature of construction and the relatively short duration of potential exposure, the potential for any one sensitive receptor in the area to experience prolonged pollutant exposure is low. Additionally, the Proposed Project, which involves passive recycled water storage, does not include operational activities that would be considered substantial sources of TACs. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not expose sensitive receptors to significant pollutant concentrations during construction or operation. There would be a less-than-significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

The potential for an odor impact is dependent on a number of variables, including the nature of the odor source, distance between the receptor and odor source, and local meteorological conditions. During construction, diesel equipment may generate some nuisance odors from equipment exhaust. Sensitive receptors near the Project Site include residences and the Rose Salgado Elementary School, located approximately 0.24 miles west and 0.27 miles south, respectively. A residential community is located immediately to the south of the school, approximately 0.38 miles south of Pond 3. However, exposure to odors associated with construction activities would be short-term and temporary in nature. In addition, construction activities within the Project Site would be required to comply with

SCAQMD Rule 402, which prohibits the discharge of odorous emissions that would create a public nuisance. Further, per CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation, equipment idling time is restricted to five minutes unless more time is required per engine manufacturer's specifications or for safety reasons. Compliance with this regulation would reduce odors from equipment exhaust. Given the short-term nature of construction, compliance with SCAQMD Rule 402, and the distance to the nearest sensitive receptors, project construction would not generate odors that would affect a substantial number of people, and construction impacts would be less than significant.

The Proposed Project does not include any uses typically associated with odor complaints such as dairies or composting facilities (SCAQMD, 2005). Further, the ponds in their existing condition are storing recycled water; the Proposed Project would increase the capacity but would not change the type or quality of water being stored. There would be no operational sources of odors associated with the Proposed Project, as the proposed improvements involve passive recycled water storage and would not introduce new odor-generating processes or activities. Therefore, operation of the Proposed Project would not generate substantial odors that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.4 Biological Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could adversely affect biological resources within or near the Project Site. The analysis considers potential effects on special-status plant and wildlife species, sensitive natural communities, wetlands and other jurisdictional waters, and applicable biological resource protection policies and ordinances. These issues are evaluated because development activities may result in the loss, degradation, or disturbance of habitats and species protected under federal, State, or local regulations. See **Appendix C** for details.

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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

A Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) was prepared for the Proposed Project and included as **Appendix C**. The BRA includes information from a desktop review of the Project Site as well as the results of a biological resources survey conducted on April 14, 2026. The following information was reviewed in the BRA to determine what special-status species have potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project Site:

- USGS 7.5 degree-minute topographic quadrangles of the Project Site and vicinity
- Current and historical aerial photography
- A query of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database
- A query of the California Native Plant Society's database Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapper
- An official USFWS species list

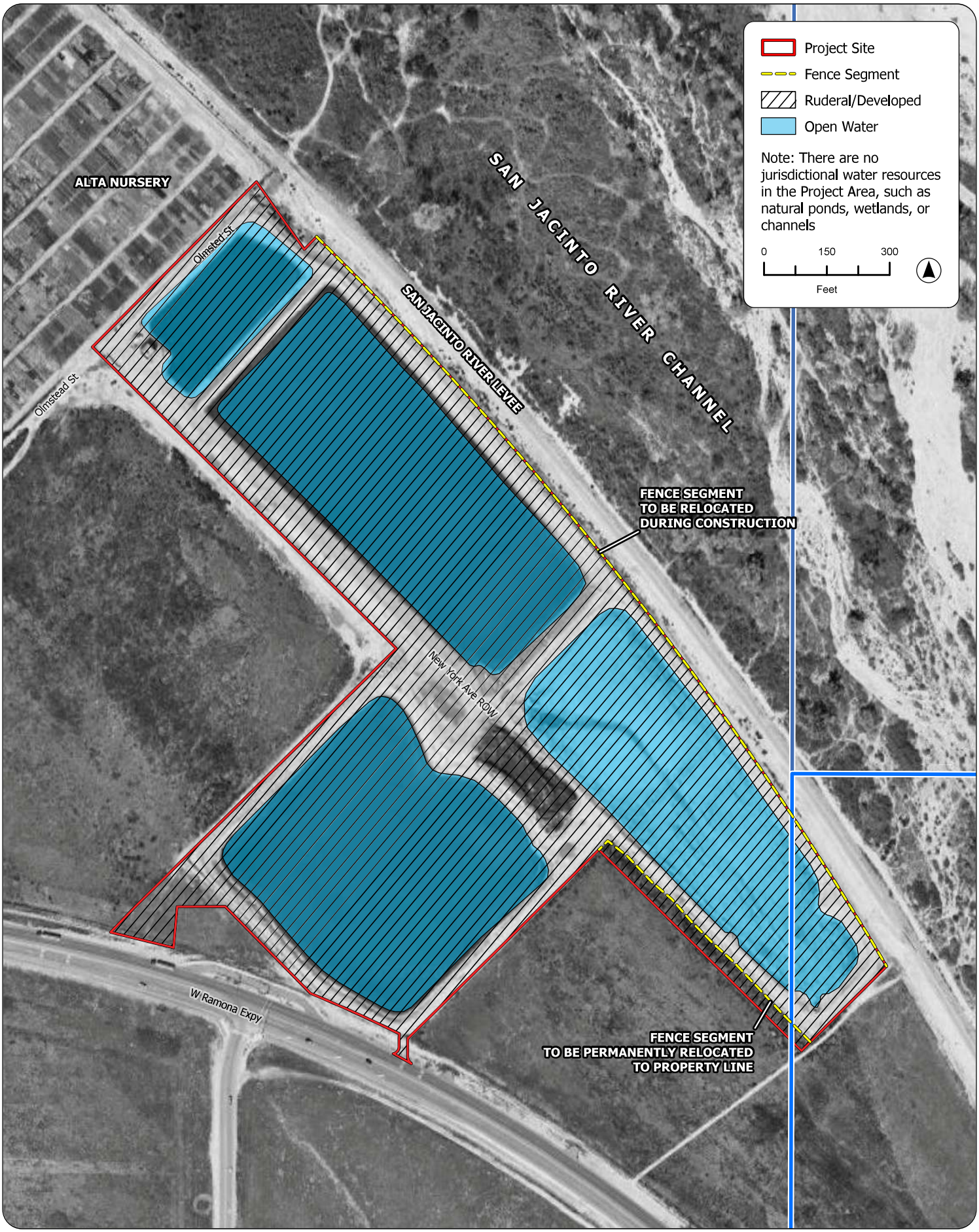
Based on the results of the desktop review and field survey, the Project Site is limited to ruderal/developed habitat that includes the recycled water ponds and surrounding managed areas, which are a mixture of bare ground and scattered weedy vegetation (**Figure 4-1**). The entirety of the Project Site is subject to regular maintenance and human

activity. The Project Site lacks suitable habitat for regionally-occurring special-status species and is outside of designated or proposed critical habitat (**Appendix C**). Although the Project Site lacks suitable habitat for special-status species, the following are known to occur in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site:

- San Bernardino kangaroo rat
- Stephens' kangaroo rat
- San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit
- San Diego desert woodrat
- Southern grasshopper mouse
- Los Angeles pocket mouse
- Southwestern pond turtle
- Arroyo toad
- Burrowing owl

Although these species are not expected to occupy the Project Site, there is a low potential that they may be observed crossing the Project Site based on the known nearby occurrences. While unlikely, presence of any of the above species during construction could result in accidental conflict with construction equipment, which would be a significant impact. **Mitigation Measures BIO-1**, **BIO-2**, and **BIO-3** include a worker environmental awareness training program to help construction personnel identify these species and avoid accidental impacts, a preconstruction clearance survey, and general construction BMPs. These measures would ensure special-status wildlife are not present prior to construction and would ensure work is halted in the unlikely event of a transient individual being observed during construction. With mitigation this impact would be less than significant.

The area surrounding the Project Site may be used by nesting birds, which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as well as California Fish and Game Code. Although the Project Site itself does not provide quality nesting habitat due to the ongoing maintenance activities, surrounding lands, especially nearby riparian habitat along the San Jacinto River, are supportive of nesting birds. Construction noise and activities that commence in the general nesting season (February 15 to September 1) have the potential to disturb nesting birds. This would be a potentially significant impact. **Mitigation Measure BIO-4** includes a preconstruction nesting bird survey for construction activities commencing in the nesting season and avoidance measures such as establishment of a disturbance free buffer around active nests. **Mitigation Measure BIO-5** contains measures specifically for burrowing owl. This would reduce potential impacts to nesting birds to a less-than-significant level.



SOURCE: ESRI, 2026; Vivid Aerial Photograph, 10/7/2025; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 9/21/2026

Figure 4-1
Habitat Types

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 Prior to construction, all construction workers shall take part in a worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) conducted by a qualified biologist. Special-status species to be covered in the WEAP program include, but are not limited to: San Bernardino kangaroo rat, Stephens' kangaroo rat, San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit, San Diego desert woodrat, southern grasshopper mouse, Los Angeles pocket mouse, southwestern pond turtle, arroyo toad, burrowing owl, and nesting birds in general. This training shall include a description of the listed species with the potential to occur in the work area, their habitat needs, an explanation of the status of the species and protection under federal and/or State law, and a list of the measures being taken to avoid or reduce impacts to the species during project construction (**Mitigation Measures BIO-2 through BIO-5**). The curriculum shall also identify the limits of the construction areas and restrictions on movement of personnel and equipment and applicable construction BMPs. The awareness program shall be conducted at the start of construction and thereafter as required for new construction personnel. The training shall include a handout or video containing all training information. The project manager shall use these training materials to train any additional construction personnel that were not in attendance at the first meeting, prior to starting work on the project.

BIO-2 A pre-construction survey for special-status species shall be conducted within 14 days of initial ground-disturbing activities. The focal species are San Bernardino Merriam's Kangaroo Rat, Stephens' Kangaroo Rat, Los Angeles Pocket Mouse, burrowing owl, and Crotch's bumblebee. If special-status wildlife is observed, a qualified biologist shall determine appropriate avoidance measures, which may include allowing the animal to leave the work area on its own, establishing an avoidance buffer, or consulting with CDFW and/or USFWS if a listed species is detected.

BIO-3 The following construction BMPs shall be implemented:

- Because kangaroo rats are nocturnal, no construction activity shall take place at night. In particular, trenching, backfilling, compacting, and other ground-disturbing activities are restricted to daylight hours.
- Trenches outside of the ponds shall be filled or tightly covered at the end of each workday. For trenches that must remain open, animal escape mechanisms shall be installed. This may consist of putting boards in trenches or creating shallow slopes at the ends of trenches so that animals may crawl out.
- Ensure that there are no animals present before trenches are filled or pipes are used.
- Pipe openings shall be covered so that no animals are able to enter pipes.

- Do not feed animals; do not litter; ensure that trash receptacles are closed tightly.
- Before any ground disturbance begins, the contractor shall delineate and mark all limits of construction using temporary construction fencing, exclusion fencing, or other clear work-limit demarcation clearly visible to all personnel to prevent construction activities from extending outside approved work limits, including along the northeastern facility boundary where work occurs adjacent to the San Jacinto River levee and where existing perimeter fencing is temporarily removed or relocated. All construction-related activities by contractors, subcontractors, or their agents and equipment (including staging, materials storage, and personnel parking areas) shall be restricted to the designated limits of construction and staging areas. The demarcation shall be maintained until construction in the adjacent work area is complete.
- All disturbed areas shall be restored to their original condition. Trenches shall be backfilled and compacted, and the original ground contours restored. Paved areas shall be repaved. Unpaved areas will be reseeded with a native seed mix and mulch applied where appropriate or stabilized using other erosion-control measures suitable for the existing EMWD facility operations.

BIO-4 If construction activities occur during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), pre-construction surveys for the presence of nesting birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 500 feet of proposed construction areas and within 7 days of the start of vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities using binoculars where access is limited. If active nests are identified, the qualified biologist shall determine a suitable avoidance buffer based on the needs of the species observed. Avoidance measures shall include establishment of a buffer zone using construction fencing or the postponement of vegetation removal until after the nesting season, until after a qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged and the nest is otherwise inactive. Avoidance buffers may vary in size depending on the species' life history requirements, habitat characteristics, project-related activities, and disturbance levels.

BIO-5 The pre-construction survey for the burrowing owl shall be in accordance with the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW, 2012). The initial take avoidance survey shall occur no less than 14 days prior to initiating ground-disturbing activities, with a final survey conducted within 24 hours prior to initiating ground-disturbing activities. If, after the initial take avoidance survey, no suitable burrowing owl habitat, including burrows, is present, then the second survey 24 hours prior to ground disturbance is not required. If no active burrowing owl burrows (nesting sites) are identified within the potential impact area of the project during the take avoidance surveys, then no additional action is required.

If active burrowing owl burrows are identified within the potential impact area, the project shall avoid disturbing active burrowing owl burrows (nesting sites) and burrowing owl individuals. Buffers shall be established around occupied burrows in accordance with guidance provided in the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW, 2012) based on the proposed level of disturbance. For low disturbance projects, initial setback distances for avoidance of active burrows shall be 200 meters (approximately 656 feet) from April 1 to October 15 and 50 meters (164 feet) from October 16 to March 31. Exceptions can be made to the avoidance distance for areas with natural (hills, trees) or artificial (buildings, walls) barriers in place. The final avoidance buffer shall be at the discretion of the biologist. If, after consideration of a reduced buffer, an adequate avoidance buffer cannot be provided between an occupied burrow and required ground-disturbing activities, then passive relocation activities during the non-breeding season (September 1 through January 31) may be authorized in consultation with CDFW, which would include preparation, approval, and implementation of a Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan in accordance with protocol described in the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant with Mitigation.

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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Habitat on the Project Site is limited to ruderal/developed habitat (**Figure 4-1**). Riparian habitat is not present within the Project Site, and ruderal/developed habitat types are not considered sensitive, nor are they identified as priority habitats by local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS. As there are no sensitive habitats present within the Project Site there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None Required.

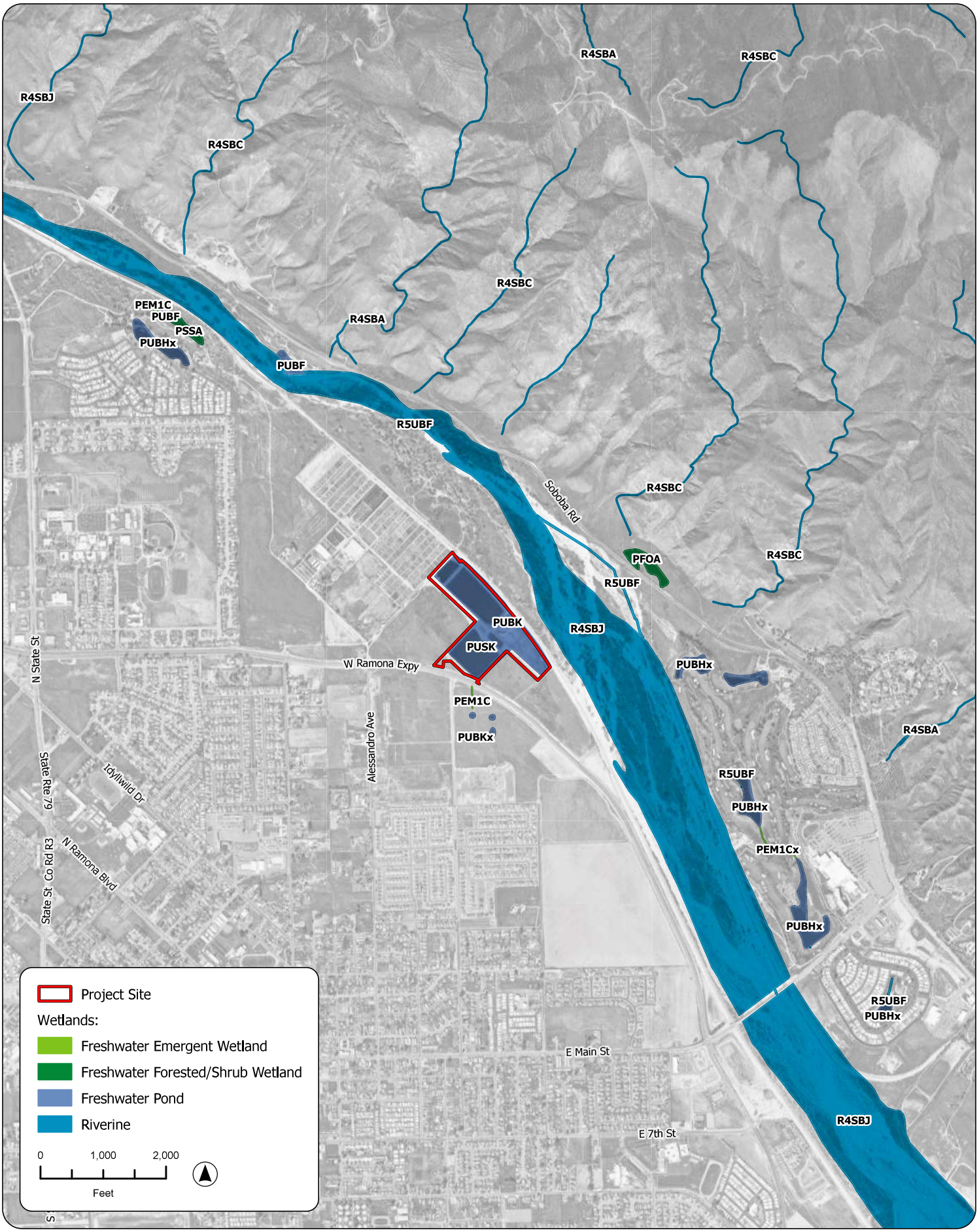
Significance Determination

No Impact.

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

The Project Site includes three recycled water basins. These features are manmade and hydrologically isolated from other surface waters (**Figure 4-2**). Manmade isolated ponds do not meet the definition of waters of the U.S. as these features are artificial, dug from uplands, and lack a significant nexus to surface waters meeting the definition of waters of the U.S. It is also noted that these features fail to meet the definition of waters of the State. Per the State Policy for Water Quality Control: State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State (SWRCB, 2021), surface waters that are artificial and subject to ongoing operations and maintenance are not considered waters of the State. Surface waters designed for treatment, storage, or distribution of recycled water are also specifically exempted from the definition of waters of the State. As there are no waters of the U.S. or State within the Project Site, including wetlands, no direct impacts would occur.

However, during construction of the Proposed Project, off-site surface water quality has the potential to be degraded from stormwater transport of sediment from disturbed soils or by accidental release of hazardous materials or petroleum products from sources such as heavy equipment servicing or refueling. This is a potentially significant impact for land disturbances of one acre or greater in size where the footprint of disturbance is large enough that this risk becomes significant. For such projects, the landowner must enroll under the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Construction General Permit prior to the initiation of construction. In conjunction with enrollment under this Permit, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, Erosion Control Plan, and a Hazardous Materials Management/Spill Response Plan must be created and implemented during construction to avoid or minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation, or accidental release of hazardous materials. Post-construction site stabilization is also required to ensure operational risks associated with impaired runoff are minimized. Implementation of these measures mandated by law would reduce potential indirect impacts to water quality to a less-than-significant level. With consideration of required permitting, this impact would be less than significant.



SOURCE: USFS, 5/7/2025; ESRI, 2026; Vivid Aerial Photograph, 10/7/2025; Acorn Environmental, 7/1/2026

Figure 4-2
National Wetlands Inventory

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

The Project Site is surrounded by security fencing and is subject to facility maintenance activities that discourage wildlife use and occupation. Directly adjacent, however, is the San Jacinto River and its floodplain, which is an important wildlife corridor and also serves as a seasonal fishery. The Project Site is separated from this corridor by a large levee and by fencing. Impacts would be limited to the Project Site, which is wholly within the security fencing and lacks wildlife corridors and nursery sites. Project implementation will not create any new wildlife movement barriers or erect any new permanent fencing. No impacts to off-site wildlife corridors or nurseries would occur. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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

The Proposed Project would not involve the removal of trees and does not propose actions in conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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?

There are two habitat conservation plans (HCPs) in the region – the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat HCP and the Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) (**Appendix C**). The Project Site is located within the Stephen's kangaroo rat HCP Plan Area but is not near any designated core areas for the HCP. As described above, the Project Site is already developed and does not provide suitable habitat for Stephen's kangaroo rat and would not result in any conflicts with this HCP.

The Project Site is located within the Plan Area for the Western Riverside County MSHCP, and approximately 1.5 acres of the eastern portion of Pond 2 is located within MSHCP Criteria Cell 2893. The Study Area is also adjacent to the San Jacinto River, which is designated as MSHCP Conserved Public/Quasi-Public Lands. EMWD is not a signatory to the MSHCP and is not required to obtain MSHCP consistency approval or rely on MSHCP take coverage unless EMWD elects to participate as a Special Entity or such participation is otherwise required by an approving/permitting agency. The Proposed Project would occur within an existing developed and maintained recycled water storage facility. As discussed in more detail in the BRA (**Appendix C**), the Proposed Project would not affect MSHCP Reserve Assembly goals, riparian/riverine or vernal pool habitat, narrow endemic plant species, or conserved lands, and would implement pre-construction surveys and avoidance measures for burrowing owl, San Bernardino Merriam's kangaroo rat, Los Angeles pocket mouse, and other special-status species as described above. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the goals or provisions of the MSHCP.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.5 Cultural Resources

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

Discussion

A Cultural Resources Inventory was prepared for the Proposed Project in May 2026, which includes a comprehensive discussion on the archaeological, ethnographic, and historic context of the Project Site vicinity, as well as an evaluation of potential historic, cultural, and archaeological resources located within the Project Site (see **Appendix D**). The investigation included a literature review, records search, and field survey, which are evaluated in the impact analysis below, as well as a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search and Native American outreach, which are discussed in **Section 4.18**.

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

No historical resources were identified within the Project Site during the Cultural Resources Inventory. The records search identified four previous cultural resource studies intersecting portions of the Project Site; however, no previously recorded cultural resources were identified within the Project Site. Within the 0.5-mile radius surrounding the Project Site, the records search identified 14 additional cultural resource studies and three previously recorded historic-period resources, consisting of a sparse refuse scatter, a historic residence, and remnants of the former Raymar Dairy facility. However, these resources are located outside of the Project Site and would not be impacted by the Proposed Project. In addition, the field survey of the Project Site did not identify any historic-period or

precontact cultural resources. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact on historic resources.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

No archaeological resources were identified within the Project Site during the Cultural Resources Inventory (**Appendix D**). The landforms within the Project Site consist primarily of former channels and riverwash associated with the San Jacinto River, which represent unstable depositional environments where intact archaeological deposits are unlikely to be preserved. Therefore, archaeological sensitivity within the Project Site is considered low. In addition, the field survey did not identify any new resources within the Project Site. As discussed in **Impact a)**, the records search identified four previous cultural resource studies but did not identify any previously recorded cultural resources within the Project Site. Of the three previously recorded resources identified within the surrounding 0.5-mile radius, all were historic-period resources and none were archaeological in nature. In addition, a search of the Native American Heritage Commission SLF returned negative results, indicating a low potential for sensitive Native American cultural resources within or near the Project Site. However, previously unidentified archaeological resources could be encountered during ground-disturbing construction activities, which is a potentially significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** through **CUL-5** would reduce impacts to archaeological resources by requiring monitoring during ground-disturbing activities and establishing procedures for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of any resources discovered during construction.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-1: Tribal Monitoring

Tribal Monitoring Agreement: At least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, EMWD shall contact the Consulting Tribe to develop a Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement (Agreement). The Agreement shall address the treatment of archaeological resources inadvertently discovered on the project site; project grading; ground disturbance and development scheduling; the designation, responsibilities,

and participation of tribal monitor(s) during grading, excavation, and ground-disturbing activities; and compensation for the tribal monitors, including overtime, weekend rates, and mileage reimbursement.

Tribal Monitoring: A tribal monitor shall be present for ground-disturbing activities associated with the project. At least seven business days prior to ground-disturbing activities, EMWD shall notify the Tribe(s) of the grading/excavation and monitoring program/schedule, to coordinate the tribal monitoring schedule. The tribal monitor shall have the authority to stop and redirect grading activities to evaluate the nature and significance of any archaeological resources discovered within the project limits. Such evaluation shall include culturally appropriate temporary and permanent treatment pursuant to the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement, which may include avoidance of cultural resources, in-place preservation, data recovery, and/or reburial so the resources are not subject to further disturbance in perpetuity. Any reburial shall occur at a location determined between EMWD and the Consulting Tribe, details of which shall be addressed in the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement. Treatment may also include curation of the cultural resources at a tribal curation facility, as determined in discussion among EMWD, the project archaeologist and tribal representatives as addressed in the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement.

CUL-2 Worker Training

Worker Environmental Awareness Program: A qualified archaeologist and Consulting Tribe(s) tribal monitor shall attend a pre-grade meeting with EMWD staff, the contractor, and appropriate subcontractors to discuss the monitoring program, including protocols to be followed if cultural material is encountered. A worker environmental awareness pamphlet shall be prepared and kept on site at all times in order to train new staff on protocols.

CUL-3 Evaluation of Discovered Artifacts

Artifacts discovered at the Project Site shall be inventoried and analyzed by the tribal monitor. A monitoring report will be prepared by the project archaeologist detailing the methods and results of the monitoring program, as well as the disposition of cultural material encountered. If no cultural material is encountered, a brief letter report will be sufficient to document monitoring activities.

CUL-4 Disposition of Inadvertent Discoveries

If Native American cultural resources are recovered during the course of grading (inadvertent discoveries), the following procedures shall be carried

out for final disposition of the discoveries with the tribe. EMWD shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources, including sacred items, burial goods, and all archaeological artifacts and non-human remains as part of the required mitigation for impacts to cultural resources, and adhere to the following:

1. Preservation-in-place is the preferred option; preservation-in-place means avoiding the resources and leaving them in the place where they were found with no development affecting the integrity of the resource.
2. If preservation-in-place is not feasible, on-site reburial of the discovered items as detailed in the plan required pursuant to **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** is the next preferable treatment measure. This shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from further impacts in perpetuity. Reburial shall not occur until all legally required cataloging and basic recordation have been completed. No recordation of sacred items shall be permitted without the written consent of all Consulting Native American Tribal Governments.
3. In the event that on-site reburial is not feasible, EMWD will enter into a curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR 800 Part 79 and therefore would be curated and made available to other archaeologists/researchers for further study. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility within Riverside County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.

CUL-5 Non-Disclosure of Reburial Locations

It is understood by all parties that unless otherwise required by law, the site of any reburial of culturally sensitive resources shall not be disclosed and shall not be governed by public disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act. The coroner, pursuant to the specific exemption set forth in California Government Code 6254(r), parties, and Lead Agencies will be asked to withhold public disclosure information related to such reburial.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant with Mitigation.

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

The Cultural Resources Inventory did not identify any records of human remains within the Project Site or surrounding 0.5-mile radius. While the likelihood of encountering human remains is low, there is the potential for unknown remains to be unearthed during ground-disturbing construction activities, which could result in a potentially significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure CUL-6** would reduce potential impacts to human remains by halting work and contacting the County coroner to take the appropriate course of action.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-6 Procedure for Discovery of Human Remains

If Native American human remains are encountered, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 will be followed. If human remains are encountered, no further disturbance shall occur until the Riverside County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin. Further, pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(b), the remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and disposition has been made. If the Riverside County Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. Subsequently, the Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the "most likely descendant." The most likely descendant shall then make recommendations and engage in consultations concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant with Mitigation.

4.6 Energy

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether construction or operation of the Proposed Project could result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. The analysis considers anticipated electricity and fuel use, consistency with applicable energy-efficiency plans and regulations, and opportunities to reduce energy demand. These issues are evaluated because efficient energy use helps conserve finite resources, reduce environmental effects associated with energy production and consumption, and support State and local energy-conservation goals.

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

Construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to last 18 months and would result in energy consumption in the form of fuel (i.e. gasoline and diesel) for worker, hauling, and vendor vehicle trips. However, project-related fuel consumption would be temporary and would cease upon completion of construction. Fuel consumption associated with construction would also be typical of similar construction projects and would not require the use of new or uncommon energy resources beyond those routinely consumed in California. In addition, the Proposed Project would comply with CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation, which imposes limits on idling and mandates construction fleets reduce emissions by phasing out older high-emitting diesel vehicles, improving the overall fuel efficiency of the fleet. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project would

not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, and impacts would be less than significant.

The Proposed Project, which involves passive recycled water storage, is expected to require a similar level of O&M activities as the existing ponds; therefore, operational energy usage is expected to remain consistent with existing conditions. Accordingly, operation of the Proposed Project would not result in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

Construction equipment used for the Proposed Project would comply with CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation. In addition, the Proposed Project involves passive recycled water storage and is not anticipated to substantially increase operational energy demand beyond existing conditions. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.7 Geology and Soils

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could expose people or structures to hazards associated with geologic, seismic, or soil conditions. The analysis considers potential effects related to fault rupture, seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, erosion, unstable or expansive soils, soil suitability for wastewater disposal systems, and paleontological resources. These issues are evaluated because unsuitable geologic and soil conditions could affect structural stability, public safety, and the integrity of proposed facilities or result in the loss of scientifically important paleontological resources. A map of soils within the Project Site is provided as **Figure 4-3**.

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.

According to the Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared for the Proposed Project (**Appendix A**), the Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or other known active fault zone. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is associated with the San Jacinto Fault Zone, including the Claremont Fault located approximately 800 feet northeast of the Project Site and the Casa Loma Fault located approximately 2.06 miles southwest of the Project Site (**Appendix A**). Although the Project Site is located within a seismically active region of Southern California, no known active fault is mapped as crossing the Project Site. **Appendix A** concluded that the likelihood of surface fault rupture occurring at the Project Site during the life of the proposed improvements is low. Therefore, the potential for

surface fault rupture at the Project Site is low, and the Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects associated with rupture of a known earthquake fault. Impacts would be less than significant.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

The Project Site is located within a seismically active region of Southern California and could be subject to strong ground shaking from earthquakes occurring on nearby active faults. A deterministic seismic hazard analysis was performed as part of **Appendix A** for the Project Site. This analysis identified the San Jacinto Fault Zone as the controlling seismic source, and it is expected that very strong ground shaking could occur at the Project Site (estimated maximum considered earthquake ground acceleration of approximately 0.446g). **Appendix A** concluded that the potential for strong ground motion at the Project Site is high during the design life of the Proposed Project. Although the Project Site could experience strong seismic ground shaking, the Proposed Project consists of improvements to an existing recycled water storage facility and would not involve the construction of habitable structures or other land uses that would substantially increase the number of people exposed to seismic hazards. Furthermore, **Appendix A** concluded that the Proposed Project is feasible from a geotechnical standpoint, provided that the recommendations contained in the report are incorporated into project design and construction. These recommendations include requirements related to earthwork, fill placement and compaction, excavation and trench construction, foundation design, drainage control, and geotechnical observation during construction. Implementation of these recommendations would reduce potential geologic and seismic hazards associated with strong ground shaking The Proposed Project would also be designed and constructed in accordance with the California Building Code. Therefore, compliance with applicable building and implementation of the recommendations contained in **Appendix A** would reduce seismic hazards to acceptable levels. Impacts related to strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Liquefaction is the process by which saturated, unconsolidated soils temporarily lose strength during strong seismic shaking and behave as a fluid. Liquefaction is most likely to occur in loose sandy soils with shallow groundwater conditions. Soils underlying the Project Site primarily consist of sandy alluvial soils of the Dello and Grangeville series with generally low slopes ranging from 0 to 5 percent (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2026; **Figure 4-3**). Although the California Geological Survey does not identify the Project Site within a mapped liquefaction hazard zone,

Appendix A evaluated liquefaction potential because operation of the ponds can saturate underlying soils. Under assumed maximum pond water levels and a design-level seismic event, the geotechnical investigation identified potentially liquefiable soil layers beneath portions of the Project Site and estimated seismic settlement ranging from approximately 5 to 9 inches. However, as discussed in **Impact a.ii**), **Appendix A** did determine that the Proposed Project is feasible from a geotechnical standpoint, provided that the recommendations contained in the report are incorporated into project design and construction. The Proposed Project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations of **Appendix A** and applicable California Building Code requirements. Therefore, impacts related to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, would be less than significant.

iv) Landslides?

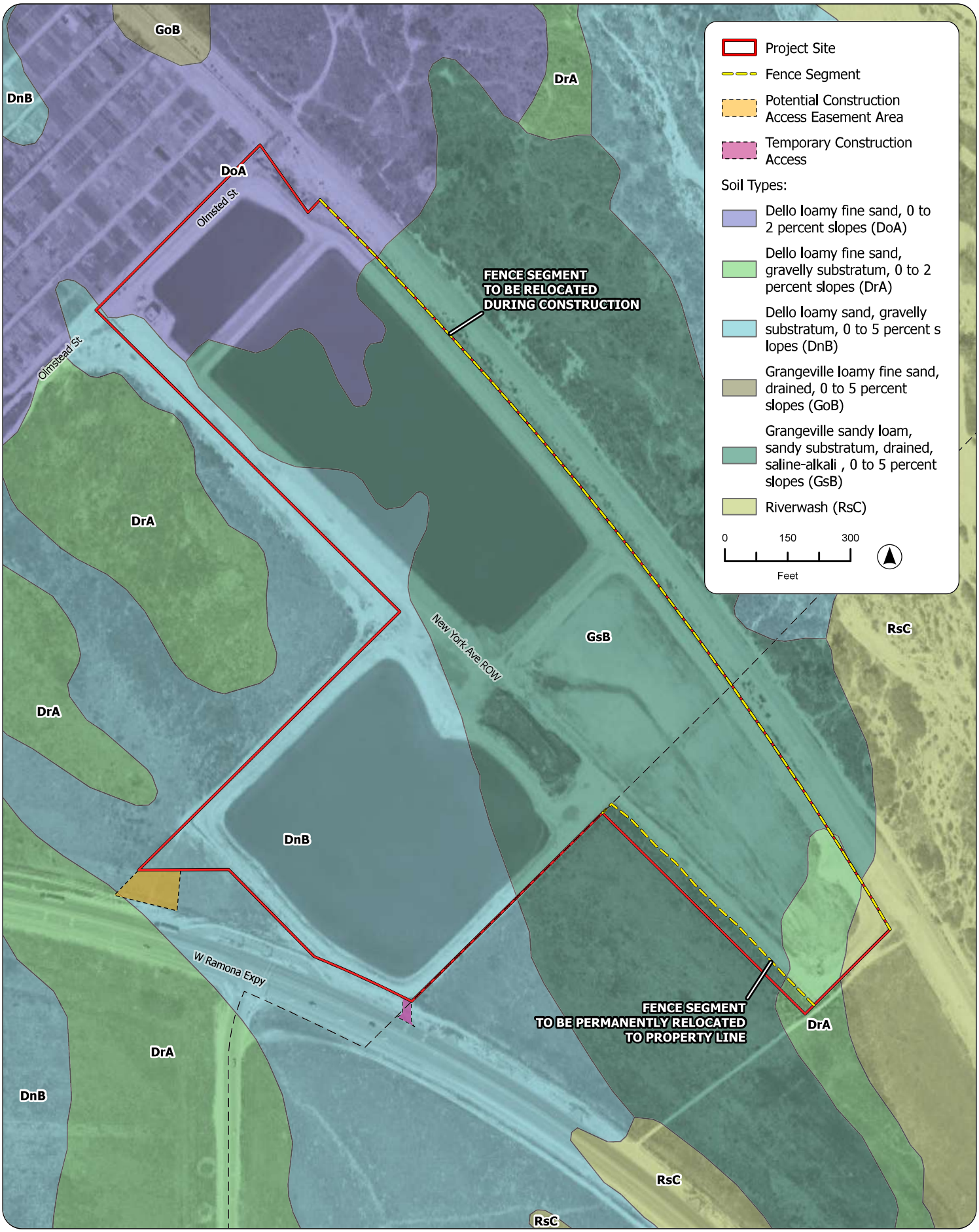
Seismically induced landslides and other slope failures can occur during or following earthquakes in areas characterized by steep terrain and unstable slopes. The Project Site consists of an existing recycled water storage facility located on relatively flat terrain and is not located on or adjacent to steep natural slopes. Although the Proposed Project includes expansion of the ponds and raising of existing berms, it would not alter regional topography or create conditions that would increase the potential for landslides. Furthermore, **Appendix A** concluded that the potential for earthquake-induced landslides at the Project Site is low. Therefore, the potential for seismically induced landslides or slope failure at the Project Site is low, and impacts related to landslides would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.



SOURCE: NRCS Soils, 2025; ESRI, 2026; Vivid Aerial Photograph, 10/7/2025; Riverside County, 2026; Acorn Environmental, 9/21/2026

Figure 4-3
Soil Types

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

Construction of the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, berm raising, pipeline installation, and other activities that would temporarily disturb soils and increase the potential for erosion. As described in **Section 2.6**, Environmental Commitments, the contractor would prepare and implement a SWPPP in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit. The SWPPP would include BMPs to control erosion, sedimentation, stormwater runoff, and tracking of soils onto public roadways. In addition, disturbed pond berms would be stabilized through the application of soil-cement. Therefore, substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil would not occur during construction or operation , and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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?

As discussed under **Impacts a.iii)** and **a.iv)**, the Project Site is relatively flat, is not located on or adjacent to steep slopes susceptible to landslides, and would be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations contained in the **Appendix A**. Although the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, and berm raising activities, the pond berms would be stabilized through the application of soil-cement to improve long-term slope stability. **Appendix A** concluded that onsite soils have negligible collapse potential and a very low expansive potential, with an expansion index of 0. In addition, the report evaluated liquefaction and seismic settlement hazards and concluded that the Proposed Project is feasible from a geotechnical standpoint provided its recommendations are incorporated into project design and construction. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not be located on a geologic unit or soil that would become unstable and result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, collapse, or expansive soil hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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?

Expansive soils can shrink and swell as moisture content changes, which can result in damage to foundations, pavements, pipelines, and other improvements. As discussed under **Impact a.iii)**, soils underlying the Project Site are characterized by very low linear extensibility, indicating a low shrink-swell potential. **Appendix A** concluded that onsite soils have a very low expansive potential, with an Expansion Index of zero, and that expansive soils are not anticipated to be present at the Project Site. The Proposed Project would also be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations contained in **Appendix A**. Therefore, impacts associated with expansive soils would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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?

The Proposed Project would not require septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems because it would not generate wastewater needing treatment. Any temporary sanitary facilities used during construction would be serviced by an authorized waste hauler and would not be disposed of onsite. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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

Ground-disturbing activities associated with the Proposed Project, including pond excavation, pipeline trenching, monitoring well relocation, and berm improvements, could encounter previously unknown paleontological resources during construction. The Project Site is underlain by Quaternary alluvium (**Figure 4-3** and **Appendix A**), a geologic unit that is considered to have high paleontological sensitivity at depths of 10 feet or greater below the ground surface (County of Riverside, 2015). The Project Site is also located within an existing disturbed recycled water storage facility that has been subject to prior grading and excavation activities, which reduces the potential for intact paleontological resources to occur near the surface. Most excavation activities associated with the Proposed Project would occur at relatively shallow depths; however, pond deepening and monitoring well construction could extend into previously undisturbed sediments with higher paleontological sensitivity. Therefore, there is some potential to encounter previously unknown paleontological resources during excavation. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires a paleontological resources mitigation and monitoring plan to be prepared prior to commencing construction activities that would exceed four feet in depth. Therefore, while there is some potential to encounter previously unknown paleontological resources during excavation, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation Measures

GEO-1: Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan

A Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be prepared prior to commencing construction activities that would exceed four feet in depth that could directly affect geologic formations with high paleontological resource sensitivity. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to carry out and manage the plan. Fieldwork may be carried out by a qualified paleontological monitor working under the direction of the paleontologist. Components of the Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- The paleontologist shall attend the pre-grading meeting(s) to inform the grading and excavation contractors of the paleontological resource mitigation program and shall consult with them with respect to its implementation.
- The paleontological monitor shall spot check the original cutting of previously undisturbed sediments within high-resource-sensitivity formations at subsurface depths of four feet or greater to inspect exposed cuts for fossils.

- If fossils are discovered, the paleontologist or monitor shall recover them. In instances where recovery requires an extended salvage time, the paleontologist or monitor shall be allowed to temporarily direct, divert, or halt ground-disturbing activities to allow recovery of fossil remains in a timely manner. Where deemed appropriate by the paleontologist or monitor, a screen-washing operation for small fossil remains shall be set up.
- Recovered fossils, along with copies of pertinent field notes, photographs, and maps, shall be deposited in a scientific institution with paleontological collections. A final summary report that outlines the results of the mitigation program shall be completed. This report shall include discussion of the methods used, stratigraphy exposed, fossils collected, and significance of recovered fossils.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant with Mitigation.

4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

Discussion

The detailed greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis presented in **Appendix B**, including the regulatory framework, environmental setting, methodology, and full impact analysis, is incorporated herein by reference. The discussion below provides a summary of impacts.

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

The 2019 Riverside County Climate Action Plan (CAP) establishes a screening threshold of 3,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_2e) per year for small projects (Riverside County, 2019). Projects below this threshold are considered less than significant and would not require mitigation. Based on guidance from the SCAQMD, total construction GHG emissions resulting from a project should be amortized over the lifetime of a project, which is defined as 30 years (SCAQMD, 2008). GHG emissions associated with the Proposed Project would result primarily from construction activities and would involve emissions from off-road heavy equipment operation, worker vehicle commutes, and haul truck activity for the export of approximately 120,400 CY of excavated soil. The Proposed Project is not expected to generate operational GHG emissions, as it involves passive water storage and would not require increased levels of O&M activities. Consequently, operational emissions were not quantified and there are no emissions to compare against established thresholds. Total GHG emissions from the Proposed Project's two-year construction duration are detailed in **Table 4-3** and are approximately 2,485.72 MT CO_2e total, or 82.86 MT CO_2e amortized, below the 3,000 MT CO_2e/year screening threshold established by the Riverside County CAP. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Table 4-3: Total Estimated Construction GHG Emissions (MT CO_2e/year)

Summary Report	Emissions
2027	1,644.08
2028	841.64
Total Construction Emissions	2,485.72
Amortized Construction Emissions	*82.86*
2019 Riverside CAP Threshold	*3,000*
Thresholds Exceeded?	No

Source: **Appendix B**

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

As discussed in **Impact a)**, the Proposed Project would result in construction GHG emissions below the 3,000 MT CO_2e/year screening threshold, as established by the Riverside County CAP, and negligible operational GHG emissions. As such, the Proposed Project would not result in emissions that would adversely affect state-wide attainment of GHG emission reduction goals as described in Assembly Bill (AB) 32 and Senate Bill (SB) 32. AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, established a statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, while SB 32 extended California's climate goals by requiring a reduction in statewide GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Project emissions would therefore have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to global climate change impacts, and the Proposed Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether construction or operation of the Proposed Project could create a significant risk to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials or through reasonably foreseeable accidental releases. The analysis also considers existing hazardous-materials sites, proximity to schools and airports, emergency-response and evacuation planning, and wildfire-related hazards where applicable. These issues are evaluated because hazardous conditions or accidental releases could adversely affect public health, worker safety, soil, groundwater, surface water, and surrounding land uses.

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

Construction of the Proposed Project would involve the use of routine hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, and solvents. For the purpose of this analysis, hazardous materials are substances that, because of their chemical or physical properties, could pose a risk to human health or the environment if improperly handled, stored, used, or released. In small quantities, and with proper management, these materials are not acutely hazardous and do not represent a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Improper handling of hazardous materials has the potential to result in spills or leaks, which could contaminate soil, groundwater, and surface water, including the nearby San Jacinto River. However, as described in **Section 2.6**, the Proposed Project would be subject to EMWD standard construction specifications, practices, and procedures, which require compliance with all relevant and applicable federal, State, and local regulations that pertain to the transport, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and waste during construction of proposed facilities. Specifically, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with CCR Title 22 and the Hazardous Waste Control Law; the Division of Occupational Safety and Health of California Construction Safety Plan/Hazard Communication Program; and CFR Section 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response. During operation, the Proposed Project would involve the use of small quantities of vermin abatement and weed control products, as needed. However, these uses represent routine facility maintenance activities that would be subject to applicable State and local regulations. Therefore, impacts related to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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?

As described in **Impact a)** above, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would involve the use of routine hazardous materials; however, these materials are not acutely hazardous and do not represent a significant hazard to the public or the environment. However, construction and operation activities could result in accidental spills or releases of fuels, lubricants, or other hazardous materials. To reduce this risk, the

Proposed Project would be required to comply with the Division of Occupational Safety and Health of California Construction Safety Plan/Hazard Communication Program and 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response. These regulations establish requirements for hazardous material handling, worker safety, and emergency response procedures. Therefore, impacts related to reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

Rose-Salgado Elementary School is located approximately 0.27 mile south of Pond 3. Hazardous materials utilized during construction of the Proposed Project would be limited to small amounts of fuels, lubricants, and solvents, which do not represent a significant hazard to the public or environment. Project construction would be undertaken in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the proper use of these common hazardous materials. During operation, the Proposed Project would involve the use of small quantities of vermin abatement and weed control products, as needed. However, these uses represent routine facility maintenance activities that would be subject to applicable State and local regulations. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter miles of a school.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

Review of the EnviroStor and GeoTracker databases determined that the Project Site is not located on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code

Section 65962.5 (DTSC, 2026; SWRCB, 2026). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment. There would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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?

The Project Site is not located within an airport land use plan. The nearest airport, Hemet-Ryan Airport, is located approximately 6.2 miles southwest of the Project Site. Accordingly, the Proposed Project is not located within the two-mile distance where airport operations could expose people to safety hazards or excessive noise. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise related to airport use for people residing or working in the Project area; there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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

The Proposed Project would result in a temporary increase in vehicle traffic during construction. However, as described in **Section 2.6**, construction traffic would be managed through implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan approved by the City and County, which would maintain traffic flow and ensure emergency access is maintained throughout construction activities. Upon completion of construction, roadways would return to existing conditions. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

The Project Site is located primarily within "Very High" and "High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), with a small portion located within a Moderate FHSZ, and is in a Local Responsibility Area (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection [CAL FIRE], 2026). However, the Proposed Project would not introduce any habitable structures or substantially increase human presence onsite that could expose people to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Human presence at the Project Site would be limited to temporary construction activities and periodic O&M activities, which would remain consistent with existing conditions at the facility.

During construction, the Proposed Project could temporarily increase wildfire ignition risk through the use of construction equipment and vehicles on site. However, the Project Site is largely denuded of vegetation due to ongoing maintenance practices which minimizes the risk of fire. Furthermore, as described in **Section 2.6**, the Proposed Project would be subject to EMWD standard construction specifications, practices, and procedures, which require the implementation of fire prevention measures. These measures include regular inspection of the work area and storage areas to ensure fire prevention measures are enforced, maintaining fully charged fire extinguishers onsite, equipping construction equipment with spark arrestors, using a fire watch or spotter during welding activities, and properly storing flammable materials to prevent ignition. With the implementation of these measures, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) result in a 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 offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐

iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether construction or operation of the Proposed Project could adversely affect surface water, groundwater, drainage patterns, or water quality. The analysis considers potential effects related to erosion, stormwater runoff, flooding, groundwater recharge and supplies, and consistency with applicable water-quality control plans and sustainable groundwater management programs. These issues are evaluated because changes in drainage or the release of pollutants could affect water resources, aquatic environments, nearby properties, and public health.

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

The Project Site is located adjacent to the San Jacinto River and surface water features occur south of the site across Ramona Expressway, including an emergent wetland and freshwater ponds (USFWS, 2026; **Figure 4-2**). Construction of the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, pond deepening, berm improvements, pipeline installation, dewatering, and soil export, which could temporarily increase the potential for erosion, sedimentation, non-stormwater discharges, and accidental spills that could affect surface water or groundwater quality. Dewatering associated with excavation of saturated soils beneath the ponds would require temporary groundwater pumping. Groundwater generated during dewatering would be reused onsite for soil compaction or dust control, pumped to Pond 1A, and/or discharged to an existing EMWD sewer adjacent to the site located on Ramona Expressway just southwest of Pond 3 (**Figure 2-4**). Discharge to the existing sewer could be conducted via a temporary above-ground pipe. Groundwater would not be discharged to any wetlands or streams. As described in **Section 2.6**, Environmental Commitments, the contractor would be required to prepare and implement a SWPPP and associated BMPs in accordance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. These measures would control erosion, sedimentation, non-stormwater discharges, and

accidental releases during construction. Following construction, operation of the expanded recycled water storage facility would be similar to existing conditions and would not introduce new sources of pollutants that could substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

The Proposed Project would expand an existing recycled water storage facility and would not substantially increase groundwater extraction, water demand, or introduce new residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural uses requiring groundwater supplies. Although temporary dewatering would occur during construction, the extracted groundwater would be managed onsite or discharged to the existing EMWD sewer system and would not constitute a long-term groundwater withdrawal. In addition, the Proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surfaces, alter groundwater recharge patterns within the basin, or impede implementation of the applicable groundwater sustainability plan. Rather, the Proposed Project is intended to increase EMWD's capacity to store recycled water produced by existing reclamation facilities for later beneficial reuse, thereby supporting sustainable water resource management. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies, interfere with groundwater recharge, or conflict with sustainable groundwater management of the basin, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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 a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

Construction of the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, pond deepening, berm improvements, pipeline installation, and other ground-disturbing activities that could temporarily increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation. As discussed under **Impact a)**, the contractor would prepare and implement a SWPPP and associated BMPs in accordance with the NPDES Construction General Permit to control erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff during construction. In addition, disturbed pond berms would be stabilized through the application of soil-cement. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially alter existing drainage patterns in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site, and impacts would be less than significant.

ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

The Proposed Project would occur within an existing recycled water storage facility and would not substantially increase impervious surfaces onsite. Although temporary grading and construction activities could alter localized drainage patterns during construction, implementation of the SWPPP and associated BMPs would control runoff from disturbed areas. Following construction, the expanded ponds would continue to function as water storage facilities and would not substantially increase surface runoff or flooding potential. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site, and impacts would be less than significant.

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

As discussed under **Impact a)**, the contractor would prepare and implement a SWPPP and associated BMPs in accordance with the NPDES Construction General Permit to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and polluted runoff during construction. The Proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surfaces or generate substantial new stormwater runoff during operation. In addition, the Proposed Project would not require construction of new stormwater drainage infrastructure or substantially alter existing drainage systems. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or

planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, and impacts would be less than significant.

iv) impede or redirect flood flows?

The Project Site is adjacent to the San Jacinto River levee system and located within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone X (Area with Reduced Flood Risk due to Levee) (FEMA, 2026). **Appendix A** further determined that the Project Site is not located within a dam inundation hazard area identified by the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams. The Proposed Project would not alter the course of the San Jacinto River or other offsite watercourses and would not impede the function of the adjacent levee. Although temporary construction access may occur adjacent to the levee, no construction activities would occur on the levee itself. In addition, the Proposed Project would not substantially increase impervious surfaces or alter regional drainage patterns. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not impede or redirect flood flows, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

As discussed under **Impact c.iv)**, the Project Site is located adjacent to the San Jacinto River levee system within FEMA Flood Zone and is not located within a dam inundation hazard area. **Appendix A** also concluded that the Project Site is not subject to tsunami hazards. Construction activities would involve the use of fuels, lubricants, and other materials that could potentially affect water quality if released. However, implementation of the SWPPP and associated BMPs, as discussed under **Impact a)**, would minimize the potential for accidental spills and pollutant releases during construction. In addition, operation of the Proposed Project would be similar to existing conditions and would not involve substantial quantities of hazardous materials that could be released as a result of inundation. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not create a significant risk of release of pollutants due to flooding, tsunami, or seiche hazards, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

As discussed under **Impact a)** and **b)**, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project could potentially affect water quality or groundwater conditions if not properly managed. However, the Proposed Project would implement BMPs and erosion control measures through implementation of a site-specific SWPPP in compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit and would not substantially increase groundwater extraction or interfere with groundwater recharge. In addition, the Proposed Project is intended to improve EMWD's ability to store recycled water produced by existing reclamation facilities for later reuse. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.11 Land Use and Planning

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could physically divide an established community or conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect. The analysis considers the relationship of the Proposed Project to surrounding land uses and relevant planning documents. These issues are evaluated because incompatible development or conflicts with adopted land use policies could adversely affect community cohesion, planned development patterns, and environmental resources.

a) Physically divide an established community?

The Proposed Project involves the increase in water storage capacity of the existing ponds through deepening, expansion, and raising of the berms. The Proposed Project would be contained within the Project Site and would not physically divide an established community. A construction access easement would be placed immediately west of Pond 3 but would be returned to its existing state following project completion. Additionally, the existing fence would be moved to the EMWD property line, although this would not physically divide an established community and would remain on EMWD land. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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?

The Alessandro Ponds recycled water facility has been located at the Project Site since the 1980s.

A portion of the Project Site is located in the City limits and has a General Plan designation of Public/Institutional (City of San Jacinto, 2022), while the remainder of the Project Site is located within the jurisdiction of the County and has an agricultural land use designation (County of Riverside, 2021). The Proposed Project would improve the existing recycled water facility through the expansion of ponds and would not alter the current land use of the Project Site or physically impact any surrounding land uses. As described throughout this IS/MND, any potentially significant impacts to the environment would be mitigated, and all other impacts not requiring mitigation would be less than significant or would have no impact. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Mitigation Measures

None required

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.12 Mineral Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources that are valuable to the region or the State. The analysis considers mineral resource areas identified in applicable plans, maps, or regulatory classifications, as well as locally important mineral recovery sites. These issues are evaluated because development within designated mineral resource areas could permanently preclude the future extraction of economically or regionally significant resources.

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

The Riverside County General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element designates the Project Site as Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)-3, land for which the significance of mineral resources cannot be determined (County of Riverside, 2015). Land classified as MRZ-3 is not considered a significant mineral resource. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state or of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

The Land Use Plan in the San Jacinto Valley Area Plan (Riverside County General Plan) does not identify the Project Site an Open Space for mineral resources (County of Riverside, 2021). The Project Site is not delineated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site on any local land use plans. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not impact a locally important mineral resource recovery site and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.13 Noise

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within 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?

Discussion

This section evaluates whether construction or operation of the Proposed Project could expose nearby sensitive receptors to excessive noise or groundborne vibration. The analysis considers temporary construction noise, operational noise, vibration, and consistency with applicable local noise standards and land use compatibility criteria. These issues are evaluated because excessive noise or vibration can disrupt daily activities, interfere with sleep and communication, and adversely affect the health and well-being of nearby residents and other sensitive receptors.

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

Construction

Onsite Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project would result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels from operation of heavy equipment associated with pond excavation, grading, berm repair and raising, pipeline installation, monitoring well relocation, soil export, and soil-cement placement. Construction equipment would include excavators, scrapers, dozers, graders, rollers, drill rigs, water trucks, and a temporary soil-cement batch plant. Construction is anticipated to occur over approximately 18 months. The Project Site is located partially within the City of San Jacinto and partially within unincorporated Riverside County. As discussed in **Section 2.6**, construction activities would occur between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. These hours would be compliant with the City of San Jacinto Development Code Section 8.40.090 and Riverside County Ordinance No. 847, however, EMWD, as a public agency, is not subject to other jurisdictional agencies' established noise standards, such as from the City or County. Furthermore, EMWD has not established an applicable noise standard of its own for permanent or temporary ambient noise levels. Instead, EMWD voluntarily follows a "good neighbor" approach by applying local and federal noise standards as appropriate to evaluate the Proposed Project's noise impacts under CEQA.

An Acoustical Analysis Report was prepared for the Proposed Project (**Appendix E**). The analysis evaluated construction noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors, consisting

of four residences (all associated with a residential community located approximately 0.38 miles south of Pond 3) and one school located (approximately 0.27 mile south of Pond 3). The locations of the modeled sensitive receptors are shown on Figure 4 of **Appendix E**. Construction noise modeling was performed using CadnaA acoustical modeling software and assumed a conservative worst-case condition in which all construction equipment would operate simultaneously. Because neither the City nor County establishes a quantitative construction noise threshold, **Appendix E** utilized a construction noise criterion of 80 A-weighted decibels (dBA) equivalent continuous sound level (L_{eq}) at residential land uses based on the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual for evaluating temporary construction noise impacts at noise-sensitive receptors.

Predicted construction noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors ranged from 49.9 dBA L_{eq} to 54.8 dBA L_{eq}. The highest predicted noise level, 54.8 dBA L_{eq} at the residence located at 21848 Olmstead Street, would remain approximately 25 dBA below the 80 dBA L_{eq} threshold. Therefore, temporary construction noise would not result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels.

While temporary construction noise impacts would be less than significant, the Proposed Project incorporates several construction noise (BMPs to minimize temporary noise effects (see **Section 2.6**). These measures include limiting construction activities to daytime hours consistent with City of San Jacinto Development Code Section 8.40.090 and Riverside County Ordinance 847; locating stationary noise-generating equipment, staging areas, and materials as far from sensitive receptors as feasible; orienting equipment to minimize noise exposure to adjacent receptors; maintaining construction equipment in good working order and utilizing appropriate noise control devices such as mufflers and engine enclosures; prohibiting unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines; utilizing electrically powered equipment where feasible; and limiting the use of horns, alarms, whistles, and bells to safety warning purposes only. These measures would further reduce temporary construction noise exposure at nearby sensitive receptors. Construction impacts would be less than significant.

Off-Site Hauling

In addition to on-site construction, Proposed Project would also generate temporary truck traffic associated with the export of approximately 120,400 cy of soil. As described in **Appendix E**, traffic noise impacts were evaluated using CadnaA acoustical modeling software to compare existing traffic noise levels along representative haul routes (see Figure 5 of **Appendix E**) with future traffic noise levels that include project-generated haul truck traffic. The analysis evaluated the average daily export of approximately 40 one-way

truck trips and calculated resulting roadway noise levels at representative sensitive receptors along the potential haul routes. Consistent with standard acoustical practice, a project-related increase of 3 dBA was used as the threshold of significance because it represents a doubling of acoustic energy and is generally considered the minimum change that may be perceptible under outdoor conditions. Modeled traffic noise increases at sensitive receptors along the haul routes ranged from 0.0 to 0.3 dBA. Because all predicted increases are substantially below the 3 dBA significance threshold, soil export activities would not result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels.

Operation

Following construction, operation of the expanded recycled water storage facility would not introduce substantial new noise-generating equipment or activities. Operational activities would be consistent with those occurring under baseline conditions, including routine inspections, monitoring, vegetation management, minor maintenance, and occasional repairs. No new employees would be required for O&M activities, and no substantial increase in operational traffic would occur. Therefore, operation of the Proposed Project would not result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in excess of applicable standards established by local ordinances or other agencies. Operation impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

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

Construction of the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, berm repair and raising, pipeline installation, monitoring well relocation, and soil export activities. These activities would generate temporary groundborne vibration from the operation of heavy construction equipment. The vibratory roller is anticipated to generate the highest vibration levels of the equipment expected to be used during construction and therefore represents the worst-case vibration source for the Proposed Project.

Appendix E evaluated potential vibration impacts at nearby sensitive receptors. The analysis utilized vibration source data published in the FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. Based on FTA reference vibration levels, a vibratory roller

generates a peak particle velocity (PPV) of approximately 0.210 inches per second at a distance of 25 feet. The significance of construction vibration is typically evaluated based on the potential for structural damage and human perception. The Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual identifies a PPV threshold of 0.5 inches per second for potential damage to modern residential structures. The Caltrans guidance also identifies vibration perception levels, with PPVs of approximately 0.01 inches per second considered "barely perceptible," 0.04 inches per second considered "distinctly perceptible," 0.10 inches per second considered "strongly perceptible," and 0.40 inches per second considered "severe."

The nearest off-site structure is located approximately 1,230 feet west of the area where the vibratory roller would operate closest to adjacent receptors, along the western boundary of the Project Site. Using the FTA vibration attenuation methodology, vibration levels generated by the vibratory roller would attenuate to approximately 0.003 inches per second PPV at the nearest structure. This vibration level is substantially below the Caltrans structural damage threshold of 0.5 inches per second and is also below the 0.01 inches per second threshold associated with barely perceptible vibration. Because construction vibration levels would remain well below thresholds associated with structural damage and would not be perceptible at nearby sensitive receptors, construction activities would not generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

No operational sources of substantial groundborne vibration are associated with the Proposed Project because operation of the expanded recycled water storage ponds would not involve vibration-generating equipment beyond routine maintenance activities similar to existing conditions.

Therefore, vibration impacts during construction and operation would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

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?

The closest airport to the Project Site is Hemet-Ryan Airport, located approximately 6.2 miles to the southwest. Therefore, the Project Site is not located within two miles of any public airport or public-use airport, and would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels from such uses. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

4.14 Population and Housing

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth or displace existing housing or residents. The analysis considers the construction of new homes, businesses, infrastructure, or other improvements that could facilitate

growth beyond that anticipated in adopted plans. These issues are evaluated because unplanned growth or displacement could increase demand for housing, infrastructure, public services, and other community resources.

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)?

The Proposed Project is limited to the storage expansion of the recycled water facility ponds and would not introduce any residential, commercial, or other uses. The Proposed Project would expand Ponds 1, 2, and 3, allowing for increased recycled water storage capacity and improved water transportation. As such, the Proposed Project would meet existing and future demand for planned development and would not provide for excess capacity that could induce unplanned growth. The EMWD Urban Water Management Plan describes a database for planned projects that allows EMWD to track planned development and prepare for future project demands accordingly; thus, the Proposed Project would support growth that has been planned for (EMWD, 2025). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth either directly or indirectly.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

The Proposed Project would be contained within the Project Site and would not impact any existing residential structures. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not displace any existing people or housing and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.15 Public Services

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could increase demand for public services or require the construction or expansion of public facilities that could result in significant environmental effects. The analysis considers fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public services. These issues are evaluated because population growth, new development, or changes in land use can affect the ability of service providers to maintain acceptable levels of service.

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

i) Fire protection?

Fire protection services for the Project Site and vicinity are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department. The Proposed Project is limited to the expansion of the existing recycled water ponds' storage capacity and would not introduce any residential, commercial, or other uses that would require fire protection services. The Project Site would continue to be served by the Riverside County Fire Department and additional services would not be required. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded fire protection facilities and no impact would occur.

ii) Police protection?

Police services for the Project Site and vicinity are provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. The Proposed Project is limited to the expansion of the existing recycled water facility ponds' storage capacity and would not introduce any residential, commercial, or other uses that would require police protection services. The Project Site would continue to be served by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and additional services would not be required. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded police protection services and no impact would occur.

iii) Schools?

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not introduce any residential uses that would generate student enrollment or otherwise increase demand for school services. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded school facilities and no impact would occur.

iv) Parks?

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not introduce any residential uses that would generate any population increase that would increase demand for parks. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded parks and no impact would occur.

v) Other public facilities?

Other public facilities include libraries and government administrative services. The Proposed Project is limited to the expansion of the recycled water facility ponds and would not introduce any residential uses that would generate any population increase that would increase demand for other public facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded public facilities and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.16 Recreation

Issues	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could result in significant environmental effects. The analysis considers whether project-related population growth or changes in land use could accelerate the physical deterioration of recreational resources. These issues are evaluated because increased demand may affect the condition, capacity, and availability of parks and other recreational facilities.

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?

The Proposed Project is limited to the expansion of the existing recycled water facility ponds' storage capacity, and would not introduce any residential uses that would increase population or demand for parks. The Proposed Project would meet existing and future demand for planned development and would not provide for excess capacity that could induce growth that would increase the use or demand for parks. Therefore, no impacts to existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities are anticipated to result from the Proposed Project.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

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?

The Proposed Project is limited to the expansion of the recycled water facility ponds and would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is located approximately 2 miles north of the Project Site, although the portion of the San Jacinto River that runs adjacent to the Project Site is not considered a recreational area The nearest park is Sallee Park, approximately 1 mile southwest of the Project Site. The Proposed Project would not impact these recreational spaces. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impact.

4.17 Transportation

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could affect the transportation system or conflict with applicable transportation plans, policies, or safety standards. The analysis considers vehicle miles traveled (VMT), roadway and intersection operations where relevant, access and circulation, hazards associated with roadway design, emergency access, and facilities for transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. These issues are evaluated because transportation-related changes can affect mobility, safety, accessibility, air quality, and the overall efficiency of the circulation network.

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

The Proposed Project is limited to construction activities to expand the water storage capacity of the existing water storage ponds; once constructed, it would not require any new maintenance activities that would generate vehicle trips. As detailed in **Section 2.4**, *Construction*, the primary transportation activity associated with construction of the Proposed Project would be the removal of approximately 120,400 cy of soil from the

Project Site generated from the deepening of the ponds. Excavated soil could be hauled by truck to nearby sites for use as fill using City-designated truck routes such as Ramona Expressway, Lake Park Drive, North State Street, and North Sanderson Avenue. If no sites are available to accept the soil, the soil would be hauled to the Lamb Canyon Landfill north of San Jacinto by way of Ramona Expressway and North Sanderson Avenue.

Excavation would occur over 18 months, and the export of soil is expected to generate an average of approximately 40 one-way truck trips per day. In addition, approximately 33 daily one-way vehicle trips would be generated by construction workers commuting to and from the Project Site. In total, the Proposed Project would generate, on average, 73 vehicle trips per day – vehicles that would be added to the local roadway network. The Transportation Impact Analysis prepared for the 2040 General Plan EIR (Kittelson & Associates, 2021) indicated that existing average daily traffic (ADT) on West Ramona Expressway is approximately 23,861 trips, and operates at Level of Service B.[2] The addition of vehicle trips generated by construction of the Proposed Project on West Ramona Expressway (approximately 73 vehicle trips per day) would represent less than a 1-percent increase in traffic levels, and therefore would not result in any noticeable change in operating conditions. Project contributions to traffic levels on other local roadways would be even smaller, as vehicle trips would disperse as they travel further away from the Project Site. Furthermore, these trips are temporary in nature and would cease upon completion of construction.

Construction access to the Project Site would be from one or two temporary construction entrances directly off West Ramona Expressway (**Figure 2-4**). All construction staging, including construction equipment and worker vehicles, would be located fully within the Project Site, with the exception of hauling trucks staging along Ramona Expressway during the export hauling operation. The temporary construction entrances on Ramona Expressway will require Encroachment Permits from Riverside County and/or the City of San Jacinto . The Encroachment Permits provide necessary regulation of the encroachment process to safeguard the public interest in the roadway facility and to ensure continuing safety and convenience for the traveling public.

To minimize the effects of increased haul truck and construction worker vehicle activity at the access driveway, the construction contractor would submit a Traffic Control and Detour Plan to the County and City for review and approval. This will supplement and expand upon the conditions identified in the required Encroachment Permits. The Traffic Control and Detour Plan is included as an Environmental Commitment (see **Section 2.6**). The

[2] Level of service (LOS) letter grades range from LOS A to LOS F (from better to worse congestion), with LOS A signifying free-flow traffic and LOS F signifying operations that are over roadway capacity.

Traffic Control and Detour Plan would allow the coordination of daily construction activity and would include measures to ensure that traffic conditions are maintained as near normal as practicable. Such measures would likely include standard efforts such as the use of cones, barriers, signs, and flaggers, where applicable.

There are no bus stops near the Project Site. A shared-use path is located on the south side of West Ramona Expressway; the Traffic Control and Detour Plan would maintain access along this facility for bicycles and pedestrians. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

The Proposed Project would not result in a permanent change to VMT, as no new operational vehicle trips would be generated once construction activities have concluded. Truck haul and construction worker vehicle trips would be temporary, occurring over the 18-month construction period. Furthermore, both the City and the County exempt projects generating fewer than 500 and 110 daily vehicle trips, respectively, from preparing a VMT analysis, with the presumption that VMT impacts would be less than significant based on the substantial evidence provided in the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory supporting SB743 implementation (City of San Jacinto, 2020; County of Riverside, 2020; OPR 2018). Since construction of the Proposed Project would generate fewer daily vehicle trips than the City and County thresholds described above, no further VMT analysis is required and impacts related to consistency with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

The Proposed Project is limited to construction work that would be conducted fully within the Project Site and would not make any permanent changes to the existing circulation network. Increases in truck haul and construction worker vehicle trips at the temporary construction entrance located directly off West Ramona Expressway at the southern corner of Pond 3 (see **Figure 2-4**) would be temporary and would be managed by a Traffic Control and Detour Plan, which would maintain safe traffic flow and pedestrian/bicycle access along West Ramona Parkway. The entrance would be gated to control access to construction vehicles. If a second temporary construction entrance is required, it would be developed at the southwestern corner of Pond 3 and would be developed as described above. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Increases in truck haul and construction worker vehicle trips at the construction access driveway, would be temporary and would be managed by a Traffic Control and Detour Plan, which would maintain traffic flow and pedestrian/bicycle access along West Ramona Parkway. As described in *Section 4.17a* above, vehicle trips generated during construction and operation would not result in a noticeable change in roadway operations. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in inadequate emergency access to or from the Project Site, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

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

Discussion

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on tribal cultural resources (TCRs), both identified and undiscovered, in accordance with AB 52, which requires consultation between lead agencies and Native American tribal organizations during the CEQA process. A Cultural Resource Inventory was conducted for the Proposed Project, which includes the results of a SLF search and a summary of consultation efforts with relevant tribal organizations under AB 52, as well as an overview of the archaeological, ethnographic, and historic context of the Project Site vicinity (see **Appendix D**).

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

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

The Project Site does not contain any known cultural, historic, or archeological resources that are eligible for listing in a local register of historical resources or the California Register of Historical Resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or PRC Section 5024.1(c). As discussed in **Section 4.5**, no known TCRs, as defined in PRC Section 21074, were identified within the Project Site during the Cultural Resources Inventory prepared for the Proposed Project, which included a literature review, records search, and field survey.

Enacted in 2014, AB 52 amended CEQA to require TCRs to be considered as potentially significant cultural resources under the CEQA environmental review process. The procedures under AB 52 offer tribes an opportunity to take an active role in the CEQA process in order to protect TCRs.

Per AB 52 and as lead agency for the Proposed Project, EMWD initiated consultation with Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the Proposed Project to identify resources of cultural or spiritual value to affected tribes. On April 17, 2026 EMWD sent consultation notification letters

via certified mail to Native American Tribal representatives on the EMWD's Master List pursuant to the requirements of AB 52 pertaining to government-to-government consultation. The tribes that were notified included the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Pechanga Band of Indians (Pechanga), Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (Soboba), and the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (YSMN). To date, EMWD has received three responses: Pechanga, Soboba, and YSMN requested tribal consultation under AB 52.

Prior to the consultation meeting, EMWD forwarded the consulting tribes the following deliverables for review: 90% preliminary designs for the Alessandro Ponds Optimization Phase II project, the results of the confidential records search, draft geotechnical investigation report, and GIS shapefiles depicting the EMWD-owned parcels associated with the project and the Alessandro Ponds.

EMWD conducted consultation with YSMN on June 09, 2026. During the consultation meeting, YSMN expressed concerns with the new excavation for the expansion of Pond 3, since this earth work could potentially impact unknown tribal cultural resources. EMWD also guaranteed that the project would be confined to the EMWD-owned parcels the ponds are located on and that there would be no impacts to the San Jacinto River.

EMWD conducted consultation with Pechanga on June 16, 2026. Pechanga stated that there are recorded TCRs in close proximity to all sides of the project site, highlighting the significance of this area to Luiseño history. Pechanga shared concerns of new excavations that are proposed as part of the project.

EMWD conducted consultation with Soboba on June 22, 2026, where Soboba highlighted the closeness of the project site to the Soboba Reservation. Soboba also shared that the proximity to the San Jacinto River was also significant to the Tribe and that previous projects in this area had impacted unknown tribal cultural resources.

There are no known TCRs listed or eligible for listing that would be impacted by implementation of the Project. Additionally, no specific TCRs were identified within the Project footprint during the tribal consultation process.

The Pechanga, Soboba, and YSMN tribes expressed concerns with the potential unearthing of unknown tribal cultural artifacts during the excavation of the ponds associated with their expansion and deepening due to the area's tribal cultural significance and the ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project. The potential impacts to these resources, as well as subsurface archaeological deposits or human remains, are considered significant. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be

required to implement Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-5 as outlined in Section 4.5, Cultural Resources, which require Native American tribal monitoring, worker environmental awareness training, and evaluation and proper disposition of any discovered resources. In addition, the Proposed Project would be required to implement **Mitigation Measure CUL-6**, as outlined in Section 4.5, which requires EMWD to avoid impacts to Native American human remains in the event that they are discovered. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1** through **CUL-6** in **Section 4.5**, which require monitoring during ground-disturbing activities and establish procedures for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of any cultural resources or human remains discovered during construction, potential impacts to TCRs would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures

See **Mitigation Measures CUL-1** through **CUL-6** in **Section 4.5**.

Significance Determination

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.

4.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could require new or expanded utility infrastructure or affect the capacity of existing utility and service systems. The analysis considers water supply and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal. These issues are evaluated because inadequate system capacity or the construction of new infrastructure could result in physical environmental effects or affect the ability of service providers to meet existing and future demands.

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?

The Proposed Project would increase the recycled water storage capacity of an existing recycled water storage facility and would include replacement and installation of on-site PVC pipelines to improve inter-pond water transfer and pond fill. The Proposed Project would not include new habitable buildings, industrial facilities, treatment plants, pump stations, substations, utility corridors, or other infrastructure that would require the construction or expansion of off-site water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. Utility improvements associated with the Proposed Project would be limited to on-site infrastructure located within the existing disturbed Project Site and would not require substantial expansion of utility systems. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require or result in the construction or relocation of utility facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impacts.

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

The Proposed Project would increase recycled water storage capacity from 172 acre-feet to 369 acre-feet to improve EMWD's ability to store recycled water produced by the San Jacinto Valley Regional Water Reclamation Facility during periods of lower irrigation demand for later beneficial reuse. Excess recycled water is stored in winter when there is

less demand for irrigation and pumped out of the ponds during the summer when irrigation demands increase. The Proposed Project would not include new residential, commercial, industrial, or other water-demanding land uses and would not substantially increase operational water demand. Water use associated with construction activities would be temporary and limited to activities such as dust control and soil compaction. Because the Proposed Project is intended to improve storage and management of existing recycled water supplies rather than increase water demand, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the Proposed Project during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impacts.

c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?

The Proposed Project would not include new residential, commercial, industrial, or other land uses that would generate wastewater requiring treatment. Rather, the Proposed Project would increase the storage capacity of recycled water already produced by existing EMWD wastewater reclamation facilities. The Proposed Project would not increase wastewater treatment demand or require expansion of wastewater treatment facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require a determination regarding additional wastewater treatment capacity beyond existing commitments. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impacts.

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?

Construction of the Proposed Project would generate solid waste associated with excavation, pipeline replacement, removal of existing materials, and general construction

debris. Most excavated soil would be exported for beneficial reuse at off-site construction projects. If suitable reuse sites are unavailable, excavated soil could be disposed of at a facility authorized to accept uncontaminated fill, such as the Lamb Canyon Landfill. Given the temporary nature of construction activities and the availability of regional disposal facilities, the Proposed Project would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards or exceed the capacity of local solid waste infrastructure. Operation of the expanded recycled water storage facility would be similar to existing conditions and would not result in a substantial increase in solid waste generation. Therefore, impacts related to solid waste generation and disposal capacity would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

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

As discussed under **Impact d)**, construction of the Proposed Project would generate limited amounts of construction debris and other solid waste. The contractor would be required to comply with all applicable federal, State, and local solid waste management requirements, including Riverside County and City of San Jacinto construction and demolition waste diversion requirements, as applicable. In addition, excavated soil would be beneficially reused where feasible, reducing the amount of material requiring disposal. Operation of the Proposed Project would be similar to existing conditions and would not generate substantial quantities of solid waste. Therefore, the Proposed Project would comply with applicable statutes and regulations related to solid waste management and reduction, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

4.20 Wildfire

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

Discussion

This section evaluates whether the Proposed Project could expose people, structures, or the environment to significant risks associated with wildfire. The analysis considers emergency response and evacuation, the potential to exacerbate wildfire hazards, the adequacy of infrastructure and fire-protection measures, and post-fire effects such as erosion, flooding, and slope instability. These issues are evaluated because development in or near fire-prone areas may increase risks to public safety, property, natural resources, and emergency-response capabilities.

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

Construction of the Proposed Project would result in temporary construction traffic on West Ramona Expressway; however, access to surrounding roadways would be maintained throughout construction. Furthermore, as discussed in **Section 4.17**, the addition of 73 construction trips per day represents less than 1 percent of the ADT on this roadway. The contractor would be required to prepare and implement a Traffic Control and Detour Plan approved by the City of San Jacinto and/or Riverside County to ensure that construction activities do not interfere with emergency access or evacuation routes. In addition, the Proposed Project would not introduce permanent road closures or circulation changes that would impair emergency response or evacuation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

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?

The Project Site is located primarily within "Very High" and "High" FHSZ, with a small portion located within a Moderate FHSZ (CAL FIRE, 2026). Construction activities could temporarily increase wildfire ignition risk through the use of construction equipment and vehicles. However, the Proposed Project would be required to implement standard fire prevention measures during construction, including maintaining fire extinguishers on site, use of spark arrestors on equipment, and use of spotters during welding activities.

The Proposed Project would not introduce habitable structures or substantial numbers of occupants and would occur within an existing recycled water storage facility consisting largely of disturbed surfaces and open recycled water storage ponds, which would not substantially increase fuel loading or wildfire spread potential. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially exacerbate wildfire risks or expose people or structures to significant wildfire hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

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?

The Proposed Project consists of improvements within an existing recycled water storage facility. The Proposed Project would not require new permanent roads, fuel breaks, power lines, or other infrastructure associated with wildfire management. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in temporary or ongoing environmental impacts related to wildfire infrastructure, and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

No Impacts.

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?

Although the Project Site is primarily located within areas designated by CAL FIRE as "Very High" and "High" FHSZ (CAL FIRE, 2026), the site is relatively flat and is not located on or adjacent to steep slopes where post-fire landslides or debris flows would typically occur. The Proposed Project would consist primarily of improvements to existing recycled water storage ponds and associated infrastructure within a previously disturbed facility and would not substantially alter existing drainage patterns. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks associated with post-fire flooding, slope instability, landslides, or drainage changes, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impacts.

4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Issues	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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This section considers whether the Proposed Project, individually or in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in significant environmental effects that warrant additional analysis. The evaluation addresses potential effects on biological and cultural resources, cumulative environmental impacts, and environmental effects that could

directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. These findings provide an overall determination of whether the Proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment under CEQA.

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?

As described in **Section 4.4** above, implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-4** and **BIO-5** would reduce potential impacts to migratory and nesting birds. The Proposed Project does not have the potential to result in any other impacts that would 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. As described in **Sections 4.5** and **4.7**, the Proposed Project would not impact any known historical, archeological, or paleontological resources and **Mitigation Measures CUL-4** and **GEO-1** are in place in the event of inadvertent discoveries during construction to minimize any potential impacts.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation.

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.)

As described in the IS/MND, all potential impacts would be mitigated to a level less than significant. Air quality is a regional issue and the cumulative study area for air quality impacts encompasses the SCAB as a whole. Therefore, the cumulative analysis addresses regional air quality plans and policies as well as the Proposed Project's contribution to a net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the SCAB is listed as a non-attainment area. As described in **Section 4.3** above, the Proposed Project does not include growth-generating components, but rather would increase the water storage capacity of the

existing recycled water facility. As such, the Proposed Project would be consistent with growth projections contained in the AQMP forecasts. Based on these considerations and pursuant to SCAQMD guidelines, project-related emissions are accounted for in the AQMP. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. As described in **Section 4.4** above, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the MSHCP. Projects that are consistent with the MSHCP would not contribute a cumulative impact to biological resources. As described in Section 4.5, implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1** through **CUL-6** would reduce potential impacts on cultural and archaeological resources to a level less than significant. As described in Section 4.18, implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1** through **CUL-6** would reduce potential impacts to TCRs to a level less than significant, thereby avoiding cumulative impacts. As described throughout the IS/MND, all other project-level impacts not requiring mitigation would be less than significant or have no impact. Therefore, the project would not result in any project-level significant impacts that could contribute to an existing cumulative impact on the environment.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

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

As described in Sections 4.1 through 4.20, the Proposed Project would not result in any substantial adverse direct or indirect impacts to human beings. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less-than-Significant Impact.

5.0 PREPARERS

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