

ES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared by the San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority (Authority) to evaluate potential environmental effects that may result from development of the proposed San Gabriel River Discovery Center at Whittier Narrows (Discovery Center or proposed project). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) statutes (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, Section 21000 et. seq., as amended) and implementing guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., Title 14, Section 15000 et. seq.). The Authority is the Lead Agency under CEQA. The Authority is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) consisting of the following agencies:

- Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper District)
- Central Basin Municipal Water District (Central Basin)
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LADPR)
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC)

ES.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Whittier Narrows Dam was constructed in 1957, creating the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area (Recreation Area). The primary purpose of the dam as authorized in the Flood Control Act of 1941 is flood control. The secondary purpose as authorized in the Flood Control Act of 1944 is recreation. A third purpose of the dam is water conservation, as set forth by the Chief of Engineers in 1956. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) owns and maintains the dam and all associated flood control facilities. The Whittier Narrows Dam Master Plan serves as a guide for the use and development of all resources within the Recreation Area. The goal of the plan is to provide guidelines for public use of public lands, while preserving the wildlife habitat, vegetation, and cultural resource values, in addition to supporting the authorized project purposes of flood control and water conservation. Local agencies with leases in the flood control basin are required to operate and maintain their own recreation facilities. Any development within the recreation area behind the dam cannot impede the primary purpose of flood control (USACE 1996).

The majority of land behind the dam, referred to as the Recreation Area, is operated and maintained by LADPR for recreational use. The Recreation Area is a 1,400-acre park near the communities of South El Monte, Rosemead, and Montebello provides fishing lakes, comfort stations, picnicking areas, playgrounds, a nature center, an equestrian facility, trails, a multipurpose athletic complex, a military museum, soccer fields, volleyball courts, and archery, skeet, pistol and trap ranges. The proposed project is located in the Natural Area. The Natural Area occupies approximately 300 acres in the southern portion of the Recreation Area, and it includes over 200 acres of natural woodland including 4 lakes that provide a winter sanctuary for migrating waterfowl. The Natural Area is intended to be less intensively

Executive Summary

uses than the Recreation Area. It is maintained for its habitat value, passive recreation, habitat restoration potential, and educational uses (USACE 1996).

Efforts to expand and improve the Whittier Narrows Nature Center (WNNC) have been contemplated for many years. In early 2000, the Upper District recognized the need for an educational facility within their territory to inform constituents about the physical and natural setting of the San Gabriel River, the importance of preserving and restoring the natural habitat along the waterways, and conservation and protection of the drinking water supply. An ad-hoc stakeholder group was formed, beginning a series of collaborative decisions by various local agencies, which led to the proposal for the Discovery Center. This collaboration resulted in a vision for the Discovery Center to become a multi-disciplinary facility utilized by multiple agencies to address the ecological and cultural resource issues of the entire San Gabriel River watershed.

In mid 2000, a Location Committee was formed of volunteers from this stakeholder group. The committee consisted of representatives from Upper District, RMC, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (LADPW) Watershed Division, LADPR, and the Sierra Club. The Location Committee identified numerous potential sites at various locations in the San Gabriel River watershed and along the Rio Hondo River, and developed siting criteria for use in the evaluation. This evaluation concluded that the WNNC and the Natural Area offered the greatest advantages to the project with the assumption that the WNNC location would be the preferred site for the building (Thomas Hacker Associates 2006).

The criteria included key site planning issues: access, safety, construction feasibility, sense of place/visitor experience, range of opportunities, integration of building and site, responsiveness to climatic conditions (sustainability), reflection of the partnership's goals, and service/long-term maintenance. The WNNC building location was selected as the site for the Discovery Center building for the following reasons:

- The possibility for a high quality visitor experience is exceptional at this site due to the ability to create a seamless connection between the visitor experience in the building and the natural resources of the site.
- The building program can be accommodated on the existing County-owned site, the majority of which is above the 100-year flood plain and has already been disturbed by construction of structures and non-native landscaping.
- Visitor parking can be provided in an area that has non-native vegetation and constructed in a way that complements the site and provides environmental benefits.
- A new Discovery Center in this location would draw attention to the Natural Area as a whole, enhancing its visitation and ability to attract additional funding for restoration of degraded habitat.
- A strong opportunity is created to tell the full story of the San Gabriel River watershed, its setting, and its value to wildlife and human occupants.

Based upon this conclusion, Thomas Hacker Associates was directed to develop the schematic design for the proposed project, based upon the building program through an organized, collaborative process. The Schematic Design Plan and underlying programs were completed in May 2006.¹

The Authority has worked together with federal, state, and local agencies (in particular, the USACE, which is the primary landowner at the proposed project location), as well as public and private groups to develop the proposed project that is evaluated in this EIR. Public input was sought throughout the process, during which the proposed project goals and facility design were presented for questions and comment (Thomas Hacker Associates 2006).

ES.3 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The proposed project would be located within the Natural Area on an approximately 11.3-acre site (lease boundary). It is located at 1000 North Durfee Avenue in the Whittier Narrows community of unincorporated Los Angeles County. A small portion of the project site adjacent to Durfee Avenue is located within the City of South El Monte. The lease boundary is bound by Durfee Avenue to the north, the Natural Area to the east and south, and commercial/industrial uses adjacent to the site to the west. Construction of the proposed project would involve disturbance of approximately 7 acres (construction impact area) within the 11.3-acre lease boundary. Regional access is provided by State Route (SR 60), which is located approximately one mile to the east. The lease boundary is located less than a mile from Interstate 605 (I-605).

The lease boundary includes a 0.5-acre parcel owned by LADPR and currently occupied by the WNNC. The parking lot and pathways for the WNNC are located on land owned by the USACE. The remainder of the 11.3-acre lease boundary and the surrounding Natural Area is owned by the USACE. The USACE currently leases the majority of the Natural Area and the Recreation Area to LADPR, including the lease boundary, for recreational purposes. LADPR currently operates the WNNC and associated facilities within the lease boundary and adjacent areas to the west, south, and east. The WNNC has a museum with displays of animal and plant life, a small gift shop, and a library in a building that is approximately 1,917 sf in size. Southwest of the WNNC is an approximately 899 sf outbuilding that contains restrooms and storage space. An approximately 1,000 sf picnic shelter is located farther to the south. To the east of the WNNC is the approximately 893 sf Los Angeles County Police Whittier Narrows Substation, which is responsible for patrolling approximately 16 parks in the vicinity of the Recreation Area. An approximately 726 sf maintenance building is located east of the driveway. The lease boundary also includes a 33-car surface parking lot (with 2 handicapped spaces) and 2 bus parking spaces.

The lease boundary is bound by Durfee Avenue, South El Monte High School, and a restaurant and miniature golf course to the north. The Los Angeles County Assessor's office, a church, a hotel, some

¹ The Schematic Design Report can be downloaded from the San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority website at <http://discoverycenterauthority.org/facilities/facilities.html>.

Executive Summary

restaurants, and Peck Road are located to the east. Commercial/light industrial and multi-family residential uses are located to the west. The Recreation Area and Natural Area are located farther west. Santa Anita Avenue is located approximately 0.46 miles west of the lease boundary. Zone 1 Ditch channel (also referred to as Lario Creek) and the San Gabriel River parallels the site along the southern boundary of the Natural Area approximately 0.25 miles south of the lease boundary. Pico Rivera Sports Arena, Pico Rivera Bicentennial Park, and Pico Rivera Golf Course are located south of the San Gabriel River. The 300-acre Natural Area is located south and east of the lease boundary, and west of the adjacent commercial and residential properties. The Natural Area is maintained by LADPR for habitat, restoration, and recreational purposes. The Robert S. Joe Commemorative Ditch is located approximately 200 feet east of the lease boundary.

ES.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The proposed project was initially proposed in 2000 as a cooperative project by multiple agencies and stakeholders to address the need for an interpretive nature center focused on the San Gabriel River watershed and watershed education. The interpretive center site design, facility layout and components, and indoor/outdoor exhibit areas were driven by the participating stakeholder organizations, to meet the educational needs of their respective constituencies. To accomplish this, Design and Display Committees were formed to work closely with the building and landscape architects and exhibit designers throughout the planning process. An integrated interpretive program was developed to meet the needs of the diverse partner/stakeholder group. Some members of the group included staff from LADPR; Whittier Narrows Nature Center Associates docents; the National Park Service's River, Trails and Conservation Program; the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council; the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority; the Amigos de los Rios; LADPW Watershed Management Division; and Hacienda Homeowners Association, to name only a few of the participants. This highly collaborative effort resulted in the Schematic Plan (dated May 2006), from which the following project objectives were derived.

The basic objective of the proposed project is to operate an interpretive center to educate the general and school-age population within a 25-mile radius of the project site about the San Gabriel River watershed at one accessible location that integrates indoor and outdoor exhibits and interpretive features. The following specific objectives further this basic objective:

- 1. Create an accessible interpretive center set in a unique regional setting, designed to educate the public about the San Gabriel River watershed through a combination of indoor exhibits, outdoor interpretive features, and educational programming.**

Explanation: The proposed project would provide a site where a comprehensive educational program about the watershed can be displayed in a single facility. The site and interpretive center together would deliver a program about all aspects of watershed education: geologic setting, natural history, water quality and conservation, human reliance on river resources, flood management, and river restoration. The watershed message would be presented in a single, comprehensive interpretive center that would lead visitors through each these topics utilizing multiple learning modes intended to appeal to a diverse regional urban audience. In order to meet project objectives, indoor exhibit design would link with and encourage visitors to experience the interpretive center grounds, where they can experience physical examples or regional watershed features illustrating concepts described in the indoor exhibits.

- 2. Provide an interpretive center that accommodates the K-12 school districts located within a 25-mile radius of the project site by providing standards-based grade-level appropriate educational programming through a wide range of accessible and free exhibits, classroom space, and hands-on outdoor experiences.**

Explanation: Currently, the Whittier Narrows Nature Center is estimated to serve approximately 9,600 school children annually.² One of the primary objectives of the Authority is to develop a new interpretive center in order to increase accessibility and appropriate programming to reach 18,000 to 25,000 students annually. There are presently 2.8 million schoolchildren attending 1,823 schools located in 100 school districts within a 25-mile radius of the project site. No comparable interpretive center exists that can provide a similar level of watershed education to that proposed by this project. In order to effectively reach this underserved population, any new facility would include a comprehensive and accessible reference library, appropriately sized indoor and outdoor classrooms, as well as topical and live animal exhibits all tied to age-appropriate hands-on outdoor programming for school children. An interpretive center designed to facilitate this objective and meets the needs of this culturally diverse population should be able to accommodate varying learning levels, language proficiency and age groups, and include a variety of delivery methods and learning modes.

² In 2007, only 4,747 school children are documented as attending programs at the WNNC. This is considered an anomaly by the Natural Areas Administrator.

- 3. Expand the public user base to the currently underserved, diverse urban population located within a 25-mile radius of the project site with economically and geographically accessible interpretive facilities that would enhance awareness and regional interest.**

Explanation: To meet this objective, the Authority seeks to build an architecturally unique interpretive center that would attract visitors. By situating it in the unique Natural Area, the Authority intends for the facility to serve as gateway to the outdoors for the area's dense, primarily urban population. There is presently a substantial service gap for the 10 million people living within the 25-mile radius. Because the interpretive center costs would be fully supported by the Authority, there would be no entry or parking fees, making the interpretive center financially accessible to all residents. The site selection process considered the unique characteristics of the location, as well as the tolerance for travel distance and travel time for visitors who use public and personal transportation to access the interpretive center. The location is within 0.75-miles of the junction of two major area freeways: State Route 60 (SR 60) and Interstate 605 (I-5).

Economic and geographic accessibility is critical because 52 percent of the households within the 25-mile radius are disadvantaged, falling under the California Median Household Income of \$47,493 per year. Over 29 percent of these households have median incomes under \$25,000 per year. A very diverse population is located within a 25-mile radius of the project site. Over 45 percent of this population is Hispanic, 14 percent Asian Pacific Islander, and over 9 percent African American. Within one-quarter-mile of the project site, almost 85 percent of the population identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. This is substantially higher than comparable statistics for the City of Los Angeles (46.5 percent), Los Angeles County (44.6 percent), and California (32.4 percent). A smaller proportion within the one-quarter-mile buffer are white (37.6 percent), and a much higher proportion are "some other race" (45.1 percent). By comparison, the proportion of the population identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino within 25 miles of the project site is similar to the averages for the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County.

The proposed project would create an interpretive center that would be more noticeable and that would contain information focused on a wide range of interests, as well as providing meeting rooms that would draw visitors to the site for watershed related functions. Once at the interpretive center, visitors would be encouraged to view the exhibits and be attracted by proximity and curiosity aroused within the exhibit hall to become more aware of the values that still exist in the urban area and to see how these values can be protected and expanded.

4. Create an interpretive center capable of meeting the outreach and educational programming needs of a diverse range of Stakeholders and Partner agencies.

Explanation: The proposed project's integrated topical and live animal exhibits, outdoor interpretive areas, programs, classrooms, and meeting rooms would accommodate and convey the diverse messages of its many stakeholders and multiple partner agencies.

Each of the partner agencies is responsible for one or more components of the overall educational message of the interpretive center. Taken individually, these components do not tell the full story of the watershed. The proposed project would pool the resources of these diverse partners and their supporters to convey an integrated educational and interpretive program. The extensive displays have been created to link these topics together in a way that visitors can understand both how they interrelate, but can also understand how individual residents fit into this complex pattern and how their individual actions influence the health and well-being of the entire watershed.

The proposed project would also provide a local and regional watershed education facility that demonstrates sustainable practices and connects visitors to trails and recreation opportunities consistent with the following objectives:

5. Create a unique facility for the greater Los Angeles area focusing on watershed management for habitat, flood control, conservation, and water quality.

Explanation: By maximizing its location in the heart of the Los Angeles Basin, the proposed project would provide an interpretive center that is readily accessible to millions of residents and convenient to many local water agencies, USACE, the County of Los Angeles, and the RMC with the need to educate their constituents on the relationship between water, habitat, open space preservation, and recreation. This is a key objective of the SGRCMP.

Water education facilities are presently located out of the population center. Diamond Valley Lake is 65 miles and Pyramid Lake is 80 miles from San Gabriel Valley. Although these facilities provide excellent opportunities to learn about the complex system of watershed function and water facilities that supply domestic water to Southern California, their remoteness lessens their ability to disseminate this information to the region's largely urban population. The other museums in the vicinity, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, do not address the issues of water and natural resources in an integrated manner. The other large interpretive facility in the area is the Aquarium of the Pacific, which focuses on marine ecology.

6. Create an access point and hub destination for the Emerald Necklace Park Network, as the only interpretive center in this 17-mile loop of parks, trails, and greenways.

Explanation: The Emerald Necklace alliance currently includes eight cities, Los Angeles County, the RMC, and several other parties signed on as formal members of the Emerald Necklace Park Network coalition, committed to its completion and maintenance. The Emerald Necklace Park Network is proposed as a connected network of trails and parks focused on the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo River and their tributaries.

With its proximity to the San Gabriel River and the San Gabriel River bikeway, the project site is intended to serve as a new staging area and trailhead to the Emerald Necklace Park Network via a short trail connecting the exhibit hall to the bikeway. This trailhead would also provide an opportunity for users of the San Gabriel River bikeway trail, which extends from Azusa to Seal Beach and connects through Whittier Narrows to the Los Angeles Rio Hondo Trail along the Rio Hondo River. Trail users would be able to stop in at the Discovery Center to gain further knowledge about the rivers.

7. Provide a gateway to exploration of other natural areas and recreational opportunities in the San Gabriel River watershed.

Explanation: Locating an interpretive center in Recreation Area, already the County's most visited park with 1.4 million visitors yearly, is a way to expose visitors to other recreational opportunities in the watershed region. The natural setting of the site offers a unique opportunity to draw people to this particular setting. It would provide a gateway to the Recreation Area and the County's larger park system, as well as other open space resources in the San Gabriel Watershed, such as the Angeles National Forest. The site is strategically located near the convergence of several area freeways to serve as a gateway to exploring other areas such as local city parks, the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, El Dorado Regional Park, Los Cerritos Wetlands, and the Aquarium of the Pacific.

8. Provide leadership in sustainable building and landscape design and operations by integrating these features of the project into the indoor and outdoor exhibits.

Explanation: The interpretive center would meet the U. S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Standards of the highest level (Platinum). The proposed project would provide a green building example to allow visitors to see how these features function and how they could be used in homes, workplaces, and landscapes.

Each of the Discovery Center's partner agencies is responsible for one or more components of the overall educational message of the Discovery Center. Taken individually, these components do not tell the full story of the watershed. The Discovery Center facilities would pool the

resources of these diverse partners to convey an integrated educational and interpretive program. The extensive displays have been created to link these topics together in a way that visitors can understand not only how they interrelate, but also how individual residents fit into this complex pattern and how their individual actions influence the health and well-being of the entire watershed.

ES.5 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

LADPR proposes to lease and sublease the approximately 11.3-acre project site to the Authority as part of the proposed project. As such, the project site is herein referred to as the lease boundary. Construction would occur on only 7 acres (construction impact area) within the lease boundary. The primary project features include an interpretive center, parking lot, maintenance building, open air classroom, constructed riparian/wetland area, covered outdoor classroom, and connecting pathways from these locations. The balance of the lease boundary would be set aside for habitat preservation and restoration. These components are described in detail below and summarized in Table ES-1 followed by a description of the operational characteristics of the proposed project and a summary of the anticipated construction requirements.

TABLE ES-1 PROPOSED PROJECT FEATURES

Name	Size (Approximate sf)	Function
Interpretive Center	18,230	Exhibits, classrooms, multi-purpose room, support space, lobby, administrative space, restrooms, kitchen
Maintenance Building	1,000	Office for 3 people, 3 vehicle garage, sink, counter, storage space for tools
Covered Outdoor Classroom	1,000	Classroom, restrooms
Open Air Classroom	700	Stage and informal terraces to form seating area, fire ring
Constructed Riparian/Wetland Area	29,185	Demonstration wetland and filter for storm water runoff from the interpretive center and parking lot
Parking Lot	63,755	Parking spaces, driving lanes
Habitat Preservation/Restoration Area	348,480	The balance of the site is set aside for habitat preservation and restoration.

ES.5.1 INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The existing WNNC and all existing outbuildings would be demolished in order to construct a new interpretive center in approximately the same location as the existing nature center building. The new one-story 18,230-sf interpretive center would be located on the western portion of the lease boundary along Durfee Avenue. The interpretive center would include a lobby, exhibit areas (including live

Executive Summary

animals), classrooms, multi-purpose room, support facilities, and administrative offices as described below. The footprint of the interpretive center would extend into the 100-year floodplain and below the taking line. The finished floor for the interpretive center would be constructed above the taking line and the 100-year flood elevation, in accordance with USACE requirements for construction within the floodplain.

The interpretive center lobby (approximately 1,200 sf) would include a reception area, orientation center, and sales area. Information would be available for visitors at the orientation center, including maps, brochures, trail information, and linkages to cultural and historical information, wildlife corridors, sanctuaries, and other recreational and natural resources in the San Gabriel River Watershed. A gift shop would provide education materials, retail merchandise related to the San Gabriel River, and other items. An office for staff and a storage area would also be located in the lobby.

Exhibit-related space would be provided, including interpretive programs, an introductory theater, topical and live animal exhibits, and an exhibit maintenance area. It would be approximately 7,140 sf in size. Exhibit spaces would be organized to create an interactive, engaging and non-linear experience designed to guide visitors in and out of the interpretive center, constantly reconnecting them with the Natural Area. A significant portion of the interpretive center would be dedicated to the exhibit interpretive program. Support and maintenance areas for all exhibits would be located at the back of the main exhibit hall.

Two classrooms, each sized to accommodate approximately 40 students (660 sf each), and a small library (315 sf) would provide space for educational uses inside the interpretive center. The following types of educational programs would be expected to occur within the classrooms: watershed education and natural and cultural resources programs hosted by local water districts, County departments, and other agencies; junior college internship or mentor programs; and student field trips (typically 30 to 60 students per group).

The interpretive center would be able to accommodate small and large groups for watershed related events, conferences, and meetings. This facility and surrounding area would only be used for an interpretive center and related activities. The proposed improvements are not intended as a location for events unrelated to watershed education, such as weddings, etc. The multi-purpose room would seat up to 150 people and could be partitioned to accommodate smaller groups, such as school groups. Audiovisual equipment for presentations and speakers with multimedia capability would be available. A direct doorway connecting the multi-purpose room and the entry courtyard would allow for indoor/outdoor events and would ease circulation when large numbers of people are visiting the interpretive center.

The interpretive center would include space for offices, administrative storage areas, and printing/copying equipment (approximately 2,075 sf). Essential support spaces would consist of the kitchen adjacent the multi-purpose room and the restroom facilities. The kitchen (200 sf) would provide capability for staging large and small events and provide kitchen facilities for the staff. The kitchen is not intended for on-site

food preparation, but rather for staging pre-prepared refreshments. The restrooms (600 sf) would be sized to accommodate the large numbers of visitors anticipated at the interpretive center.

ES.5.2 PARKING LOT AND MAINTENANCE BUILDING

A new 150-space ADA-accessible parking lot (approximately 63,755 sf) would be located on the east side of the lease boundary. The parking lot would accommodate 3 bus parking spaces (approximately 160 feet drop-off length). The parking lot would be constructed of semi-permeable material to allow filtration of storm water runoff into the ground. Vegetated medians would separate different sections of the parking lot. The vegetated medians and parking lot planters would function as bioswales for storm water runoff and as visual buffers between the parking lot and the adjacent Natural Area. A new vehicular entrance on Durfee Avenue east of the existing driveway entrance would provide the only vehicular access to the project site and would lead to the 150-space parking lot. Entry signs would welcome park visitors and direct them to the interpretive center. An entry gate would prohibit vehicular access into the site after regular operating hours. Bicycle and pedestrian access to the project site would be provided from the San Gabriel River trail system and from Siphon Road; however, bicycles are not allowed on the trails within the Natural Area.

An approximately 1,000 sf maintenance building would be located on the eastern end of the parking lot and would provide parking for maintenance vehicles and equipment, material storage including a code required container for combustible materials, and office space for site maintenance staff. Actual vehicle maintenance (oil changes, etc.) would not be conducted.

ES.5.3 COVERED OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS, OPEN AIR CLASSROOM, AND CONSTRUCTED RIPARIAN/WETLAND AREA

Two outdoor classrooms would be developed on-site. An open air classroom would be developed immediately south of the interpretive center and a covered outdoor classroom would be constructed to the west of the proposed parking lot. The open air classroom would allow for seating of up to 120 people and would be approximately 700 sf in size. This would be a sloped, bowl-shaped space that blends into the surrounding landscape. Seating would be comprised of informal graduated terraces built of concrete. The area would include a stage equipped with a metal fire ring capable of being covered and locked when not in use. There would be programs conducted during the day and occasional nighttime programs as well. It is expected that the fire ring would be used approximately 3 or 4 times per year during ranger talks. There would be security lighting. The covered outdoor classroom (approximately 1,000 sf) would be used for group gatherings, as well as outdoor classroom functions. Restrooms, storage space, and electricity would be provided within the same structure. Portable benches would serve as furniture. The structure would allow for a range of hands-on demonstration projects and would be used by schools or other groups as an outdoor classroom. Lighting would be provided in the covered outdoor classroom for nighttime activities.

Executive Summary

The constructed riparian/wetland would be approximately 29,158 sf (approximately 0.67 acres) in size. The riparian/wetland would replace the existing paved area of the parking lot at the WNNC. The island within the existing parking lot and the native vegetation planted therein would remain intact and apart from the constructed riparian/wetland area. A small constructed riparian/wetland area would serve two functions. First, it would provide a hands-on educational area. Second, it would filter and cleanse storm water from the interpretive center, covered outdoor classroom, open air classroom, parking lot, maintenance building, and driveway. A portion of the constructed riparian/wetland area would be membrane-lined and remain wet throughout the entire year; there would be a piped-connection from the new parking lot, outdoor and open air classrooms, and new interpretive center to channel runoff from these areas into the membrane-line portion of the constructed riparian/wetland area. Other parts of the constructed riparian/wetland area would not be membrane lined such that it would dry up in accordance with seasonal conditions. Supplemental water from the recycled water supply would be needed during summer months to maintain a minimum level of water in the membrane-line portion of the constructed riparian/wetland area for educational demonstration purposes. This water would be supplied from an existing recycled water main located on Durfee Avenue. A new connection to the site would be constructed as part of the proposed project.

ES 5.4 HABITAT PRESERVATION/RESTORATION AREA

The remainder of the 11.3-acre lease boundary that is not developed with structures or associated features (approximately 8 acres) would be set aside for habitat preservation and restoration. All new landscaping that would be installed would be native vegetation indigenous to the Whittier Narrows area.

ES.5.5 PROJECT OPERATION

The interpretive center and the parking lot would be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days per week. The meeting rooms would be available for reservations and/or rentals from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., 7 days per week subject to availability. For groups focused on cultural and natural resources and watershed conservation wanting to meet outside of operating hours, only a staff fee would be charged for that time. These groups would be allowed use of the facility for meetings that provide programs open to the public. The remainder of the lease boundary would be open during daylight hours only, except for special programs such as stargazing and moonlight hikes. The interpretive center would host a range of educational and recreational activities and would be utilized by several public agencies to deliver the message of cultural and natural resources and watershed conservation. A variety of activities would be expected to occur at the facility, such as family and senior citizen nature trail walks and bird walks, docent and volunteer training, summer camps, junior ranger and naturalist programs, moonlight and stargazing programs, and special clean-up events. LADPR would continue to operate its existing programs. A list of programs expected to be offered is shown in Table ES-2.

TABLE ES-2 PROPOSED PROJECT PROGRAMMING

Program Name	Age Range	Frequency	Size of group	Time of Day	Program Description
Docent Training	18 and over	Saturday (weekly)	15	12:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	Native flora and fauna
Family Program	Family	Saturday (monthly)	20	9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Plants and Animal identification
Summer Camp	7-14	Mon.-Fri. (Daily)	25	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Nature Education
Bird walk	16 and over	Saturday (monthly)	15	8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	Bird Counts
Annual clean ups	Family	Quarterly	25-200	varies by project	Removal of invasive and non-native plants, trash and trail maintenance
Senior Bird Walk	55 and over	Twice a month	25	9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	Flora and Fauna identification
Eagle Scout Projects	Family	Weekly	50-100	8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Community Service
Spring Nature Camp	7-14	daily for one week	25	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Nature Education
Jr. Ranger Program	7-14	Saturdays	25	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Nature Education
Jr. Naturalist Program	15-17	Tuesday & Thursday	15	3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Nature Education
Racky's Rangers	4 -6	Monday & Wednesday	15	9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon	Nature Education
Summer Camp	7-14	Daily, depending upon demand	45	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Nature Education
Moonlight Hikes	Family	1x/month	25	7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.	Physical Science
Stargazing	Family	1x/month	25	7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.	Physical Science
Central Basin	9-18+	1-2 day/wk	20-35	9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Nature and Water Education
Upper District	9-18+	1-2 day/wk	20-35	9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Nature and Water Education
Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD)	11-14		60	11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Nature and Water Education
Central Basin	Adult		45-47	6:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Meeting Room, Facility Tour
Upper District	Adult	1-2 day/month	20-35	9:30 a.m. - noon	Meeting, Facility Tour
LACSD	Adult		47	All day	Meeting, Facility Tour.
RMC Stakeholders	Adult	Annually	45	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Meeting, Facility Tour
Congressional Representative	Adult	3 X yr.	75-100	½ day	Exhibits
RMC Board Meetings	Adult	bi-monthly	50-60	4-6 hrs	Meeting

Executive Summary

Program Name	Age Range	Frequency	Size of group	Time of Day	Program Description
RMC Workshops	Adult	2-3 X yr.	40	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
RMC HSAP meetings	Adult	2-3 X yr.	20	4 hrs.	Meeting
RMC IRWMP Quarterly	Adult	2-3 X yr.	20	1/2 day	Meeting
RMC Federal Partners	Adult	6 X yr.	30-40	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
RMC State Partners	Adult	None			Meeting
RMC County Partners	Adult	2 X month	10-25	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
SGR Master Plan Committee	Adult	Annually	60-70	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
SGR Monitoring Group	Adult	4 X yr.	30	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
Watershed Council	Adult	4 X yr.	40-60	4-6 hrs.	Meeting
Upper District Special Events	Adult	2-3 X yr.	Varies	Midday, 4-6 hrs.	Water Education
Upper District Community Meetings	Adult	1-2 x yr.	30-40	Varies	Meeting
Upper District "Protector del Agua" Landscape Classes	Adult	12 x yr.	50-70	Evenings, 2-3 hrs	Water Education
Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD Receptions	Adult	2-3 X yr.	70-80	Late afternoon or early evening 2-3 hrs.	Meeting
RMC Consultant Meetings & Interviews	Adult	Ongoing	15-25	2-4 hours	Meeting
Tours of the LEED facility and grounds	Adult	Ongoing	1-15	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Facility Tour
LADPR Staff Meetings	Adult	Monthly	30-100	Morning or Afternoon	Meeting

Source: Thomas Hacker Associates 2006.

There would be no fee to enter the grounds or to park in the lot. Access to the exhibits would also be free. Some programs, such as the camps or special classes may charge a fee to participants. The interpretive center and associated facilities would only be used for educational programs, exhibits, and events related to watershed education; other uses of the site, such as weddings, parties, etc., would be prohibited. On weekdays, the interpretive center would accommodate school field trips (approximately 18,000 to 25,000 students per year) and formal school programs focusing on watershed education and/or natural area topics. Special events would occur some weekends, attracting approximately 300 to 400 visitors per day; however, most weekends would experience normal visitor levels of approximately 250 visitors per day. Expected annual attendance would range from 100,000 to 120,000 visitors (Colleen MacKay, WNNC Site Supervisor, Mickey Long, Natural Areas Administrator, Valorie Shatynski, RMC 2008). Operation of the interpretive center is anticipated to require up to 12 full time staff. Throughout the day, approximately 20

to 25 docents/volunteers, with 10 to 12 in the morning and 10 to 12 in the afternoon, would be based out of this building.

The County Police Substation that is currently located onsite would be relocated within the vicinity of the Recreation Area. It not currently known if the County Police would rent space, use existing County facilities, or build a new facility. Should it be necessary to construct a new substation, a separate environmental review process will be undertaken at that time. Officers would continue to patrol the lease boundary and the Natural Area.

ES.5.6 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN

The interpretive center would be constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building rating system, a voluntary national standard for developing and rating high-performance, sustainable buildings, often referred to as "green buildings." Green buildings are constructed to increase the efficiency of energy, water, and building materials. They are designed to reduce the impacts on human health and the environment through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal, considering the complete life cycle of building and landscape materials. From the outset of this project, members of the Authority have set out to create an innovative new interpretive center that embodies the forward thinking of their member organizations and would be certified by the U.S. Green Building Council at the highest level possible (Platinum). To that end, a project team was engaged to develop an advanced green building through an integrated design process and implementation of some of the most current green building approaches being utilized in the U.S. and abroad.

The first step in understanding the vision and goals of the owner group, the potential for green building approaches, and opportunities for LEED certification was to hold an eco-charrette. It was at this first team-building meeting that the initial LEED assessment and scorecard was created in order to determine which LEED credits would be attempted and what level of certification was possible. It was determined that LEED Platinum is achievable based on the current program and design approach.

Based on the eco-charrette and the schematic design phase, a comprehensive green building approach was developed in the building design that would result in a LEED Platinum building. This includes the site and landscape design, the building form and massing, the building envelope design, the proposed passive and active mechanical systems, water systems, and renewable energy systems. Together, these strategies would result in low-energy, durable building that would demonstrate an integrated approach to design and construction.

ES.5.7 CONSTRUCTION SCENARIO

During construction of the proposed project, the existing WNNC operations would be temporarily relocated onsite for the duration of construction activity. LADPR would operate an approximately 800 sf mobile trailer unit on the eastern edge of the construction impact area near where the maintenance

Executive Summary

building is proposed to be constructed. This trailer would provide temporary office facilities for LADPR staff currently located in the WNNC. LADPR intends to offer limited outdoor programming and oversee maintenance and management of the Natural Area from the trailer. The trailer would have an electrical hookup and a portable toilet with a hand washing unit would be placed adjacent to it. Parking would be provided for 12 to 15 cars, including staff and the public, and up to 2 school buses.

As previously stated, the lease boundary is approximately 11.3 acres in size; however, construction would be limited to the 7-acre construction impact area. Typical construction equipment would include cranes, pick-up trucks, concrete ready-mix trucks, delivery vehicles, earthmoving equipment, tractors, compaction equipment, paving machines, front end loaders, and assorted power operated hand tools. The most effective and appropriate combination of resource avoidance and monitoring would be employed during all phases of proposed project construction. Hours of construction would be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, per the County Noise ordinance. However, any construction on Saturday would only be allowed by special permission from the Authority. No construction would occur on Sundays or holidays. Prior to construction, the plans would be submitted to the USACE for approval, as well as to LADPW for approval and permitting.

It is anticipated that construction activities would occur between October 2011 and April 2013. Construction of the new driveway and proposed parking lot, demolition, site preparation, and grading are assumed to occur in the first six months. The construction of the interpretive center, open air classroom, and covered outdoor classroom would follow and take approximately one year to complete. It is assumed that completion of the proposed parking lot, site landscaping, and construction of the riparian/wetland area would continue after occupancy of the new interpretive center.

ES.6 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

A public scoping meeting was held on September 27, 2006, for the proposed project. The scoping meeting introduced the proposed project and alternatives, outlined the environmental review process, and invited public comment on the content of the environmental review. Approximately 10 citizens attended the meeting, and 6 people spoke at the meeting to express their concerns regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. Through this process, several key issues and areas of controversy were identified, including:

- Access to the project site, including access for bicyclists and equestrians;
- Impacts to existing vegetation along Durfee Avenue;
- Need for a right-hand turn-lane on Durfee Avenue;
- Impacts to birds and raptors that have been seen on-site;
- Preservation of existing Mexican elderberries located on-site; and
- Effects of the constructed wetland on the hydrology of the project site and the San Gabriel River.

In addition to the comments provided at the scoping meeting, nine comment letters were received in response to the Notice of Preparation/Initial Study for this EIR. Copies of the comment letters are provided in Appendix A. The primary areas of controversy identified by the public and agencies included the following potential issues:

- Impacts related to air quality during construction and operation;
- Fire Department access and water flow requirements;
- Impacts to County and City roadways in the project vicinity;
- On-site flood hazards and water quality issues;
- Large size truck trips and heavy construction equipment on nearby state highways;
- Wastewater discharge from the project site; and
- Proximity of the project site to Metrolink's San Gabriel line right-of-way.

ES.7 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

An analysis of environmental impacts caused by the proposed project has been conducted and is contained in this EIR. Seven issue areas are analyzed in detail in Chapter 3.0. Table ES-3 provides a summary of the potential significant environmental impacts that would result during construction and operation of the proposed project, mitigation measures that would lessen potential environmental impacts, and the level of significance of the environmental impacts that would remain after implementation of the proposed mitigation. The proposed project would not create significant and unavoidable impacts. The EIR identifies potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation for Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Noise. As discussed in Chapter 4.0, the proposed project would contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to global climate change. A detailed analysis of the environmental impacts described in Table ES-3 is presented in Chapter 3.0 of this EIR.

ES.7 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires consideration and discussion of alternatives to the proposed project in an EIR. Several alternatives, including alternate project sites and entry locations, were considered but rejected from consideration in this Draft EIR. Three alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, are reviewed in Chapter 5.0 of this document. This section summarizes alternatives to the project that were developed and the No Project Alternative, as required under CEQA.

ES.7.1 No Project Alternative

According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B), the No Project Alternative is defined as the “circumstance under which the project does not proceed.” Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed interpretive center would not be constructed and the WNNC would continue to operate within the lease boundary. Potential impacts associated with project construction and operation would be avoided because no improvements would occur within the lease boundary. Accordingly, no impacts

Executive Summary

related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, noise, and transportation and circulation would occur. Although the No Project Alternative would not result in impacts that would occur under the proposed project, it would not fulfill any of the objectives of the proposed project.

ES.7.2 14,000 SF ALTERNATIVE

The space reductions to achieve a 14,000 sf interpretive center would be accomplished by eliminating the introductory theatre, topical exhibit areas, and one classroom; reductions in the size of the sales area, lobby, and administrative office spaces would also be required. The 14,000 sf interpretive center would be constructed to meet U.S. Green Building Platinum level LEED standards, as planned for the proposed project, addressing energy and water conservation, along with sustainable materials, native landscaping, etc. A new 116-space ADA-accessible parking lot would be located on the east side of the project site. As with the proposed project, this alternative would provide parking for 3 buses. The existing woodland would be maintained to provide a vegetative buffer along Durfee Avenue to obscure direct views of the parking lot from passing motorists. As with the proposed project, a new vehicular entrance on Durfee Avenue east of the existing driveway entrance would provide the only vehicular access to the project site and would lead to the 116-space parking lot. On weekdays, the 14,000 sf interpretive center would accommodate school field trips (approximately 14,000 to 19,500 students per year) and formal school programs focusing on watershed education. Special events would occur some weekends, attracting approximately 225 to 300 visitors per day; however, most weekends would experience normal visitor levels of approximately 185 visitors per day. Annual attendance is expected to range from 75,000 to 90,000 visitors. The hours of operation would be the same as the proposed project. The multi-purpose room would remain the same size as the proposed project. The covered outdoor classroom, open air classroom, constructed riparian/wetland area, and walkways would be the same as described for the proposed project. Primarily, the reductions would include elimination of the introductory theatre and topical exhibit areas and one classroom, and reduction of the sales area, lobby and administrative office spaces. This alternative would have similar impacts to aesthetics and hydrology as the proposed project. Impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and traffic would be reduced compared to the proposed project because of the reduction in building size, area disturbed during construction, and number of visitors that would be expected to travel to the lease boundary.

ES.7.3 10,000 SF ALTERNATIVE

A 10,000 sf Alternative would be accomplished by eliminating of the introductory theatre, topical exhibit areas, and one classroom; reduction of the size of the exhibit area, meeting room, sales area, lobby, administrative office spaces, and restrooms would also be required. The same energy and water efficiency features as the proposed project would be applied to the 10,000 sf Alternative. The interpretive center would be constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED platinum level standards. Unlike the proposed project, access to the interpretive center would be provided at the existing driveway location. A new 83-space ADA-accessible parking lot would be located on the east side of the lease

boundary. On weekdays, the interpretive center would accommodate school field trips (approximately 10,000 to 14,000 students per year). Annual attendance would range from 55,000 to 66,000 visitors. The 10,000 sf Alternative would have the same operating hours as the proposed project. The covered outdoor classroom, open air classroom, constructed riparian/wetland area, and walkways would be the same as described for the proposed project. This alternative would have similar impacts to aesthetics and hydrology as the proposed project. Impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and traffic would be reduced compared to the proposed project because of the reduction in building size, area disturbed during construction, and number of visitors that would be expected to travel to the lease boundary.

ES.7.4 2,800 SF ALTERNATIVE

The 2,800 sf Alternative would have a similar layout as the WNNC and would be marginally larger and provide a more modern facility than the existing nature center. On weekdays, the 2,800 sf Alternative would accommodate school field trips (approximately 10,000 to 12,000 students per year) and formal school programs focusing on watershed education. Special events would occur some weekends, attracting approximately 100 to 120 visitors per day; however, most weekends would experience normal visitor levels of approximately 120 to 140 visitors per day. Annual attendance would range from 60,000 to 62,000 visitors. This alternative would use the existing driveway and parking lot. The 2,800 sf Alternative would operate the same programs as the existing WNNC and would not be expected to offer the range of programs and events as described for the proposed project. The 2,800 sf Alternative would have the same operating hours as the WNNC, which are generally 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., 7 days per week. The grounds would be open from dawn to dusk. The 2,800 sf Alternative would not result in impacts that would occur under the proposed project because it would function in a similar manner to the WNNC and would involve minimal site disturbance.

Executive Summary

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
AESTHETICS			
VIS-1: The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AIR QUALITY			
AIR-1: During the construction phase, pollutant emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and therefore would neither potentially violate federal or state ambient air quality standards nor substantially contribute an existing or projected air quality violation.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AIR-2: During the operational phase, regional pollutant emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD significance thresholds. The implementation of the project would not create severely congested traffic conditions and there would be no localized high concentrations of CO. Therefore, operations emissions would neither potentially violate federal or state ambient air quality standards nor substantially contribute an existing or projected air quality violation.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AIR-3: Construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.	Less than significant	Mitigation measures AIR-A through AIR-I above.	Less than significant
AIR-4: The proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
<p>BIO-1: The proposed project has the potential to adversely affect, either directly or through habitat modifications, a species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFG or USFWS. In addition, the proposed project would have an adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFG or USFWS.</p>	<p>Significant</p>	<p>BIO-A Prior to commencement of proposed project construction, a qualified restoration ecologist shall prepare a formal restoration plan to implement the replanting of sensitive vegetation. Impacts to sensitive vegetation (i.e., less than one acre of walnut woodland) shall be mitigated at a ratio of 2:1. Impacts to disturbed areas of sensitive vegetation (i.e., 0.16 acres of disturbed walnut woodland) shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1:1. Based on the ratios noted above, a total of 1.54 acres of walnut woodland shall be replanted in areas near or adjacent to the existing walnut woodland that are located outside of the construction impact area. Implementation of the restoration plan shall occur within one year of completion of proposed project construction. A 3- to 5-year maintenance and monitoring program shall be conducted to ensure that a native plant cover is achieved and aggressive nonnative species do not out-compete the native species. If the lease boundary does not contain sufficient area for proposed project mitigation, it is the responsibility of the Authority to obtain permission for replanting in an appropriate easement within the San Gabriel River floodplain. The proposed mitigation strategy is included in this report in Appendix C.</p> <p>BIO-B Of the total 27 mature native and nonnative trees³ that would be potentially impacted, 4 trees are salvageable. No more than 33 percent of the root matrix for each tree shall be removed during the transplanting process in order to assure or contribute to recovery and survival during and after the transplant process. No subsurface disturbance shall encroach the dripline extent of the</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>

³ Mature trees are defined as those trees measuring 8 inches diameter at breast height or higher. Native trees are those indigenous to California.

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		<p>tree (dripline is the furthest margin of the crown radiating out from the main stem [tree trunk]). For transplanting trees, pragmatic and practical concerns about handling ability (among other issues) become paramount in the transplant process. Therefore, for replanting relocated trees, no more than 2 to 3 feet of dripline encroachment shall occur to ensure root disturbance and impact is kept to a minimum. After replanting, the tree's root matrix shall be accessible 360 degrees and not asymmetrically obstructed (i.e., a tree abutting a wall or other structure), to prevent adequate rootball formation.</p> <p>BIO-C The native trees (redwood, elderberry, etc.) 8-inch diameter at breast height (dbh or larger) in natural areas of construction impact area lost to project-related activities shall be replaced in-kind at a ratio of 2:1. These trees shall be replaced with a minimum 15-gallon tree replanted in clusters of 3 to 4. Each non-native mature tree (8-inches dbh or larger) removed from a landscaped area around the WNNC shall be replaced at a ratio of 1:1 with a 36-inch box tree of a species native and known to the floodplain of the San Gabriel River. The replacement trees shall be planted in small groupings (3 to 4 trees) within landscaped areas of the construction impact area near the proposed interpretive center. Salvaged materials shall be used or supplemental plantings of native species appropriate to the site (occurring within the San Gabriel River floodplain and of local genetic stock) shall be used if necessary. Post-construction monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure 100 percent survival for the first year and 80 percent survival for the year after. Additional information for the proposed mitigation strategy is included in</p>	

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		<p>Appendix C of this EIR.</p> <p>BIO-D Prior to the start of construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused pre-construction surveys for the coastal western whiptail. If encountered, the species shall be relocated to an approved location based on consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game.</p> <p>BIO-E Should tree or other vegetation clearance and/or construction work need to occur during the breeding season for migratory non-game native bird species (generally March 1-September 1, as early as February 1 and as late as September 15 for raptors), weekly bird surveys shall be performed to detect any protected native birds in the trees to be removed and other suitable nesting habitat within 300 feet of the construction work area (500 feet for raptors). The surveys shall be conducted 30 days prior to the disturbance of suitable nesting habitat by a qualified biologist with experience in conducting nesting bird surveys. The surveys shall continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of clearance/construction work. If a protected native bird is found, the construction contractor shall delay all clearance/construction disturbance activities in suitable nesting habitat or within 300 feet of nesting habitat (within 500 feet for raptor nesting habitat) until August 31 or continue the surveys in order to locate any nests. If an active nest is located, clearing and construction within 300 feet of the nest (within 500 feet for raptor nests) shall be postponed until the nest is vacated, juveniles have fledged, and when there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Limits of construction to avoid a nest shall be established in the field by a</p>	

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		<p>qualified biologist with flagging and stakes or construction fencing. Construction personnel shall be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. The results of this measure shall be recorded to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.</p> <p>BIO-F The Authority shall inform the construction contractor(s), prior to the bidding process, about the biological constraints of the project site. The construction contractor(s) shall be responsible for impacts to sensitive biological resources beyond those identified in this report that occur as a direct result of construction activities. All sensitive habitat areas to be avoided shall be clearly marked on proposed project maps provided to the contractor by a qualified biologist. These areas shall be designated as “no construction” zones. The project biologist shall flag these areas prior to the onset of construction activities. Resources may need to be fenced or otherwise protected from direct or indirect impacts.</p> <p>BIO-G The Authority shall implement a contractor education program to ensure that contractors and all construction personnel are fully informed of the sensitive biological resources associated with this project. This program shall focus on (a) the purpose for resource protection, (b) contractor identification of sensitive resource areas in the field (e.g., areas delineated on maps and by flags or fencing), (c) sensitive construction practices, (d) protocol to resolve conflicts that may arise at any time during the construction process, and (e) ramifications of noncompliance. This program shall be conducted by a qualified biologist.</p> <p>BIO-H Construction in or adjacent to sensitive areas shall be appropriately scheduled to minimize potential impacts</p>	

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		<p>biological resources (i.e., outside of the nesting bird season and/or blooming periods of sensitive species with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the proposed project site).</p> <p>BIO-I Topsoil shall be stockpiled in disturbed areas presently lacking native vegetation. Stockpile areas shall be delineated on the grading plans and reviewed by a qualified biologist.</p> <p>BIO-J Staging areas shall be located in disturbed area (i.e., within the grading footprint). Staging areas are prohibited within sensitive habitat areas. Staging areas shall be delineated on the grading plans and reviewed by a qualified biologist.</p> <p>BIO-K Fueling of equipment shall take place within existing paved roads and not within or adjacent to drainages or native habitats. The construction contractor shall be responsible for inspecting construction equipment for leaks prior to operation and repaired as necessary. “No-fueling zones” shall be designated on construction maps and shall be situated a minimum distance of 50 feet from all drainages.</p> <p>BIO-L Erosion and siltation into off-site areas during construction shall be minimized. An erosion control plan and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan shall be required of the construction contractor prior to the start of construction. The Authority shall be responsible for ensuring that the erosion control plan is developed and implemented per the requirements to the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works. The plan shall include the use of hay bales, silt fences, siltation basins, or other devices necessary to stabilize the soil in denuded or graded areas during the construction and revegetation phases of the proposed project.</p>	

Executive Summary

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		<p>BIO-M All nighttime lighting from the proposed project site shall be shielded. Parking lot lighting shall be located around the perimeter of the parking lot facing inward away from native vegetation located around its edges.</p> <p>BIO-N Signs shall be posted near sensitive biological resources and sensitive habitat areas to educate staff and the public to avoid disturbance to these resources. The Authority shall post educational signage, both inside the interpretive center and at trail heads emphasizing the protection of all natural features of the Natural Area.</p> <p>BIO-O In conjunction with County, the Authority shall develop and implement a Resource Management Plan to guide all phases of Natural Area management and maintenance within the lease boundary. At a minimum, the Resource Management Plan shall include methods and provisions for: maintenance of roads, walkways, trails, and landscaping; invasive weed avoidance and removal; routine patrolling of the Natural Area for litter pick up and inspection for vandalism; and regular closure rotation of natural areas.</p> <p>BIO-P Any redundant trails within the lease boundary shall be closed and restored.</p> <p>BIO-Q If at any time disturbance to a sensitive habitat area is suspected, the interpretive center staff shall have the authority to temporarily or permanently close the area for rest or restoration.</p>	
<p>BIO-2: The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>	<p>No mitigation measures are required.</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
BIO-3: The proposed project has the potential to interfere 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.	Significant	See mitigation measures BIO-A through BIO-Q above.	Less than significant
BIO-4: The proposed project would conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.	Significant	See mitigation measures BIO-A through BIO-Q above	Less than significant
CULTURAL RESOURCES			
CR-1: The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
CR-2: The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY			
HYDRO-1: Operation of the proposed project would potentially degrade water quality.	Significant	HYDRO-A Biological or non-chemical means of controlling exotics and pests shall be utilized over pesticides where feasible. Should chemical pesticides or herbicides be required, less-persistent compounds shall be used in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and general standards of use. Application of chemicals shall be restricted such that they are not used immediately before and during rain storms or within the 24-hour period in which rain is forecast to occur.	Less than significant
HYDRO-2: Implementation of the proposed project would not alter drainage patterns of the site which could potentially result in erosion, siltation, or flooding on or off-site. Construction and operation of the proposed project would not increase the	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant

Executive Summary

TABLE ES-3 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential Environmental Impacts	Significance Determination	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
amount of surface runoff, potentially exceeding the capacity of the existing storm drain system.			
HYDRO-3: The proposed project would not place structures within the 100-year flood zone, potentially impeding or redirecting flow.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
NOISE			
NOISE-1: The proposed project would not expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in applicable plans, policies, or ordinances.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
NOISE-2: The proposed project would not expose people to excessive groundborne vibration.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
NOISE-3: Operation of the proposed project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project area.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
NOISE-4: Construction of the proposed project would not result in a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project area.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC			
TRANS-1: The proposed project would not result in an increase in traffic that would create a substantial change in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system or cumulatively exceed a level of service standard established by the County of Los Angeles.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
TRANS-2: The proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
TRANS-3: The proposed project would not result in inadequate parking capacity.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant