Initial Study and Negative Declaration

for

Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project

Los Angeles Department of Water
Environmental Affairs
111 North Hope Street, Room 1044
Los Angeles, CA 90012

August 2011

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
ROOM 395, CITY HALL
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

(Article I, City CEQA Guidelines)

LEAD CITY AGENCY AND ADDRESS:	**COUNCIL DISTRICT**
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power 111 N. Hope Street, Room 1044 Los Angeles, CA 90012	N/A
PROJECT TITLE: Big Pine Northeast Regreening	**LOG REFERENCE** N/A

PROJECT LOCATION:

The proposed project is located in Inyo County, northeast of the town of Big Pine in the Owens Valley. The project site is south of State Route 168, east of Highway 395 and west of the Big Pine Canal.

DESCRIPTION:

Under the Big Pine Northeast Regreening, 30 acres of abandoned agricultural land would be irrigated and seeded with a pasture mix to support livestock grazing. Implementation of the project will mitigate for impacts caused by abandoned agriculture and groundwater pumping activities as identified in the 1991 EIR "Water from the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1970 to 1990 and 1990 Onward, Pursuant to a Long Term Groundwater Management Plan" (LADWP, 1991).

Water will be supplied by surface water obtained from the Big Pine Canal. This will require the construction of a sump (concrete basin) from which water will be pumped. In addition, a single wooden power pole will be installed to provide power to the sump location to run the pump. The project will be supplied with up to 150 acre-feet of water per year by surface water from the above-named source. On an annual basis, an equivalent amount of water will be pumped from Well W375 to make-up for the surface water supplied to the project. Water supplied to the project will be contingent upon the Technical Group exempting well W375 for the Project under the provisions described by the Water Agreement. Additional project components include minor site cleanup, preparation of soil for seeding, fencing of the area and installation of a sprinkler system. A designated lessee will be responsible for the on-going maintenance of the pasture, which includes the use of livestock to graze the area.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT IF OTHER THAN CITY AGENCY:

FINDING:

See the attached Initial Study.

NO MITIGATION MEASURES IMPOSED.

THE INITIAL STUDY PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT IS ATTACHED.

PERSON PREPARING THIS FORM	**ADDRESS**	**TELEPHONE NUMBER**
Nancy Chung, Environmental Specialist	111 N. Hope Street, Room 1044 Los Angeles, CA 90012	213 367-0404

SIGNATURE (Official)

Nadia Parra for

Charles C. Holloway, Manager of Environmental Assessment and Planning

DATE

August 3, 2011

CEQA Initial Study and Negative Declaration

Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project

August 3, 2011

General Manager
Ron O. Nichols

Senior Assistant General Manager –
Sustainability Programs and External Affairs
Lorraine Paskett

Manager, Aqueduct Business Group
Gene Coufal

Director of Environmental Affairs
Mark J. Sedlacek

Prepared by:

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
111 N. Hope Street,
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

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Section 1
Project and Agency Information

1.1 PROJECT TITLE AND LEAD AGENCY

Project Title:	**Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project**
Lead Agency Name:	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Lead Agency Address:	111 N. Hope Street, Los Angeles, CA. 90012
Contact Persons:	Nancy Chung / Lori Gillem
Contact Phone Number:	(213) 367-0404 / (760) 873-0407
Project Sponsor:	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project was identified in the 1991 EIR "Water from the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1970 to 1990, 1990 Onward, Pursuant to a Long Term Groundwater Management Plan" (EIR) as on-site mitigation for impacts to groundwater-dependent vegetation. Implementation of the project will mitigate for impacts caused by abandoned agriculture and groundwater pumping with the conversion of approximately 30 acres of Rabbitbrush Scrub to irrigated pasture.

In 1991 the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and Inyo County entered into the "Agreement between the County of Inyo and the City of Los Angeles and Its Department of Water and Power on a Long Term Groundwater Management Plan for Owens Valley and Inyo County" (Water Agreement). The proposed regreening project is governed by the Water Agreement. For management purposes, the Water Agreement divides vegetation of the Owens Valley floor into five management types classified as A, B, C, D and E. Although the project was identified in the 1991 EIR as a mitigation project which would fall under Type E classification, the area was mapped as Rabbitbrush Scrub, a Type B designation. The approximately 30 acre project area will be delineated as a separate parcel and designated and managed as Type E, and the remainder of the existing vegetation parcel will remain Type B Rabbitbrush Scrub. This will require an amendment to the Big Pine Quadrangle Vegetation Management Map that is incorporated into the Water Agreement.

A final scoping document for the "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" was approved by the Standing Committee in September 1988. The document outlined the need, description, scope, water supply, and other information related to the project. However, in 2010 the project description was updated and changed from the 1988 scoping document as conditions associated with the project have changed (August 27, 2010). At the November 4, 2010 Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee meeting, the Technical

Group presented the Revised Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project". The main modifications to the 1988 Final Scoping Document include: changing the lease designation, revising the boundaries of the project, and amending the water supply source and method of application identified for the project. The Standing Committee adopted the Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project as a replacement to the 1988 Final Scoping Document.

The following list chronologically summarizes key background information on the project (Refer to Appendix A):

- 1982
  Standing Committee created, parties include LADWP and Inyo County.

- September 1988
  Project scoping document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine," approved by Standing Committee.

- 1991
  Project became an on-site mitigation measure in the 1991 EIR "Waters from the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1970 to 1990 and 1990 Onward, Pursuant to a Long Term Ground Water Management Plan".

- 1991
  LADWP and Inyo County entered into the Water Agreement. The proposed project is governed by the Water Agreement; and the project site will be re-designated and managed as a Type E parcel upon completion.

- November 2010
  The project scope changed as conditions associated with project changed. The Revised Scoping Document: "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Irrigated Pasture-Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project," was approved by the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee meeting was open to the public and comments were received.

Project Objective:
The objective of the proposed project is to comply with the terms of the 1991 EIR and enhance the aesthetics and re-green 30 acres of abandoned agricultural lands located adjacent to a residential area northeast of Big Pine.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project is located in Inyo County, northeast of the town of Big Pine in the Owens Valley. The project site is south of State Route 168, east of Highway 395 and west of the Big Pine Canal. The adjacent land uses include residential housing, small

businesses, open space and a County campground. Figure 1 is a photograph of the project site taken in March 2011.

Figure 1: Pre-Project Site Condition

1.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would convert 30 acres of abandoned agricultural land vegetated with rabbitbrush scrub to irrigated pasture. The pasture will be seeded with a pasture seed mix that will support livestock grazing. Water will be supplied to the project site to sustain the new vegetation by a buried 6-inch plastic pipe. The new pipeline will be installed to convey the water to the site and to distribute the water across the project area via sprinkler irrigation. Pipeline construction will include excavating a 30-inch deep by 12-inch wide trench, installing plastic pipe and backfilling the trench with the excavated soil. Measuring devices will be installed to quantify the amount of water delivered. Water trucks will be used to wet the area prior to construction to minimize dust emissions. In addition, historical resources documented by URS Corporation during an archaeological survey (URS, 2005) will be avoided during construction; the pipeline is oriented to avoid these resources.

Water will be supplied by surface water obtained from the Big Pine Canal. This will require the construction of a sump (concrete basin) from which water will be pumped. In addition, a single wooden power pole will be installed to provide power to the sump location to run the pump (See Figures 2 and 3) .The project will be supplied with up to 150 acre-feet of water per year by surface water from the above-named sources. On an annual basis, an equivalent amount of water will be pumped from Well W375 to make-up for the water supplied to the project. Water supplied to the project will be contingent upon the Technical Group exempting well W375 for the project under the provisions described by the Water Agreement.

Additional project components include minor site cleanup, preparation of soil for seeding, fencing of the area and installation of a sprinkler system. A designated lessee will be responsible for the on-going maintenance of the pasture, which includes the use of livestock to graze the area.

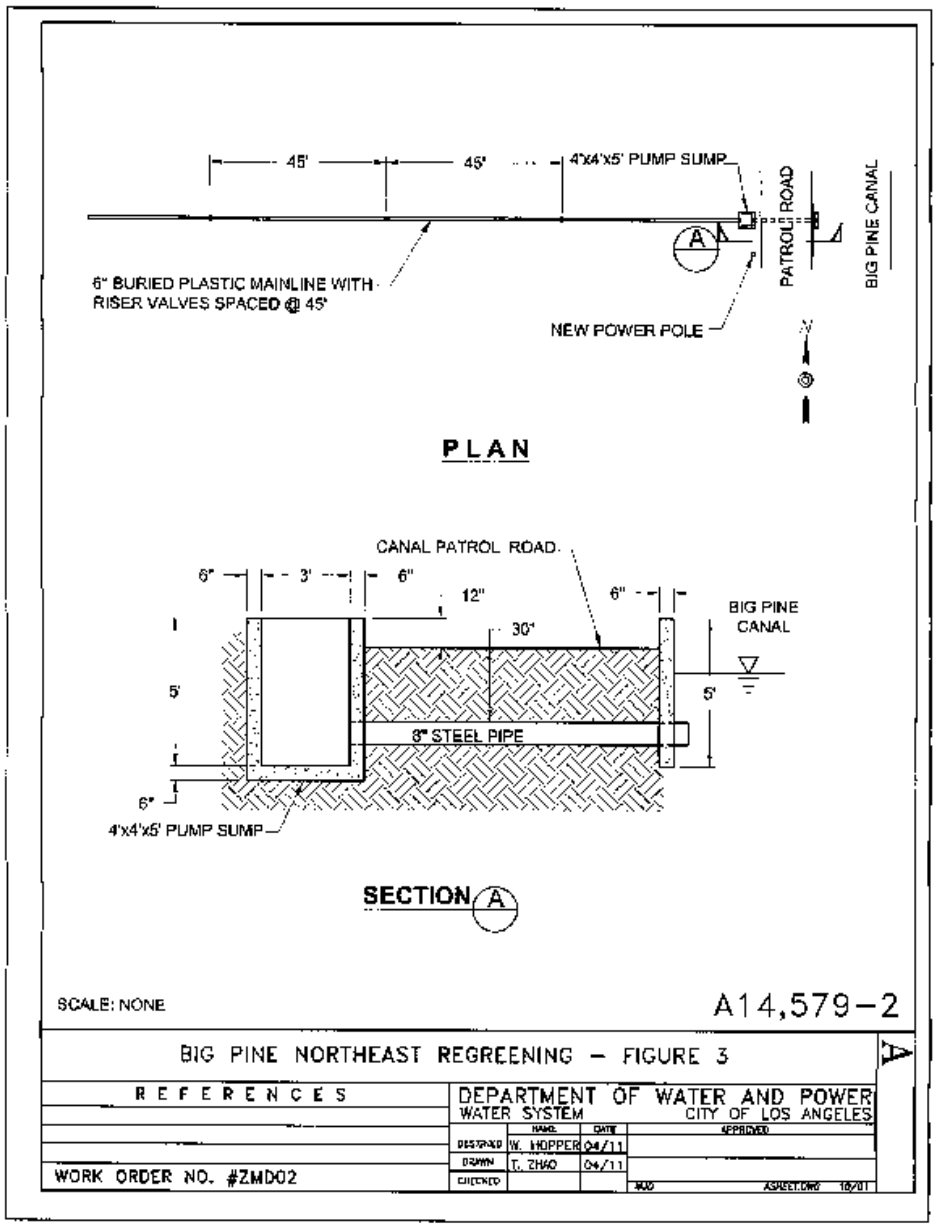
The following summarizes construction activities and maintenance necessary to implement the project (See Figures 2 and 3):

- Installation of 1,320 ft of 6-inch plastic pipe by excavating a single 30-inch deep by 12-inch wide trench and then backfilling the trench with the excavated soils.
- Construction of 4 ft x 4 ft x 5 ft concrete basin sump at the northeast corner of the project site from which water collected from the named sources will be pumped.
- Installation of a single standard wooden power pole adjacent to the sump to provide power to the sump pump.
- Installation of five-strand barbed wire fence around the perimeter of the project site.
- Minor cleanup, preparation of soil, and seeding with pasture mixture.
- Installation of sprinkler system.

The following equipment will be used during project construction: backhoe, small crane, mower, flatbed truck, pump mechanic trucks, concrete transit mixers, power pole setting truck, equipment service truck, and pick-ups. The estimated construction duration is three weeks.

Figure 2: Project Site and Construction Location

Figure 3: Sump Design Details



1.5 APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The project is located on City-owned land within Inyo County. The Inyo County General Plan designates the area as Agriculture. The zoning is Open Space; 40-acre minimum lot size, and M-2; light industrial. As a regreening effort of an abandoned agricultural parcel, the proposed project does not conflict with the LADWP Owens Valley Land Management Plan (LADWP, 2010) or the Habitat Conservation Plan for LADWP lands (in preparation by LADWP).

1.6 PROJECT APPROVALS

The proposed project has been designed in accordance with the Water Agreement. The project was approved by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee in September 1988, and the revisions were approved in November 2010. Routine maintenance of irrigation conveyance features within LADWP's system is covered by an existing Master Agreement between California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and LADWP (2008). LADWP will comply with all applicable regulations and obtain applicable permits.

Section 2
Environmental Analysis

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

2.2 AGENCY DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

☐ I find that although the 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 applicant. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the 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 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 project, nothing further is required.

Signature: Nadia Parker for Title: Manager of Environmental Assessment

Printed Name: Charles Holloway Date: 8-3-11

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

2.3.1 Aesthetics

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

The proposed project site is sparsely vegetated with rabbitbrush, native grasses, and annual forbs. The project site is disturbed with numerous dirt roads.

Figure 4: Pre-Project Site Conditions

a) **Less than Significant Impact**. The project will convert rabbitbrush scrub to irrigated pasture which will not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. There are no designated scenic vistas in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site or in sufficiently close proximity such that views from those vistas would be adversely affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** Scenic roadways are designated by BLM, Inyo National Forest, Caltrans, and the Federal Highway Administration. State Highway 395 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway from Independence to north of Tinemaha Reservoir (postmiles 76.5 to 96.9) (Caltrans, 2008). State Highway 395 is eligible for designation in the portions north and south of that segment (Caltrans, 2008). The project site is just east of State Highway 395 in the eligible, but not designated, portion of the roadway. There are no major landform features, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings on the project site. During implementation of the project, a few non-native trees will be removed. Since the project will improve the aesthetics of the parcel by regreening the area, the project will have a beneficial effect on views from a portion of roadway eligible for designation as a scenic roadway, SR 395. The impact to scenic resources is less than significant.

c) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project will not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The current project site is sparsely vegetated and disturbed with numerous roads; project implementation will increase vegetative cover and provide pasture management, a beneficial effect. The impact on visual character of the site will be less than significant.

d) **No Impact.** Since no new lighting is proposed, the project will not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect nighttime views in the project area. Therefore, no impact will occur.

2.3.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) **No Impact.** No part of the proposed project is located on or near 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 (DOC, 2006). The area of the proposed project is not mapped, and is not considered Farmland (ZIMAS, 2007).

b) **No Impact.** Existing zoning by Inyo County of the project site is OS-40 (Open Space, 40-acre minimum lot size), M-2 (Light Industrial) with a land use designation of A (Agricultural) (Inyo County, Inyo County Interactive Mapping (GIS) 2009). Since Inyo County does not offer a Williamson Act program, the proposed project will have no impact on agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts.

c) **No Impact.** The project site is not zoned as forested land nor will the proposed project result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Public Resources Code Section 12220 (g) defines "Forest land" as land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. There will be no impact or conflict with existing zoning or cause rezoning of forest lands.

d) **No Impact.** The project site is not zoned as forested land nor will the proposed project result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Public Resources Code Section 12220 (g)

defines "Forest land" as land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. There will be no impact on forest land.

e) **No Impact.** The proposed project will create irrigated pasture which will be utilized for livestock grazing. Therefore, there will be no impact relative to converting farmland to non-agricultural use.

2.3.3 Air Quality

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

The Owens Valley is located in the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD). The valley has been designated by the State and EPA as a non-attainment area for the state and federal 24-hour average PM_{10} standards. The area has been designated as attainment or unclassified for all other ambient air quality standards. Air quality is considered excellent for all criteria pollutants with the exception of PM_{10}. Large industrial sources are absent from the Owens Valley. The major sources of criteria pollutants, other than wind-blown dust, are woodstoves, fireplaces, vehicle tailpipe emissions, fugitive dust from travel on unpaved roads, prescribed burning, and gravel mining.

a) **No Impact.** The relevant air quality plan for the project area is the *Final 2008 Owens Valley PM_{10} Planning Area Demonstration of Attainment State Implementation Plan* (SIP) (GBUAPCD, 2008). The focus of this planning document is implementation of dust control measures at Owens Dry Lake, the major particulate matter source in the valley. Since implementation of the project may decrease particulate matter emissions through increased vegetation coverage, and through pasture management, the project is consistent with the applicable air quality plan. There is no impact on the applicable air quality plan.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** Emissions during project construction will result from the operation of a backhoe, small crane, mower, flatbed truck, pump mechanic trucks, concrete transit mixer, power pole setting truck, equipment service truck, and four pickup trucks. Air pollutant emissions from intermittent use of these vehicles and equipment during the estimated three weeks of construction would be minimal. Dust emissions from ground disturbance necessary to install the irrigation system will be minimized by the use of water trucks prior to, and during, ground disturbance. The GBUAPCD has not established specific quantitative thresholds of significance for air emissions related to construction. Due to the short duration of project construction and the small number of vehicles and equipment, the impact on air quality from project construction is less than significant. Since operation of the

project will increase vegetative cover on 30 acres of land, project operation will decrease dust emissions from the project site, a beneficial effect.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is a non-attainment area for PM_{10}. Construction of the project will result in dust emissions from earth disturbance. LADWP must meet GBUAPCD Rule 401, which requires that fugitive dust emission control measures be implemented to adequately prevent visible dust from the leaving the property and to maintain compliance with the PM_{10} standard. Due to the small acreage of disturbance planned and the use of water trucks as warranted, dust emissions related to project construction are not be anticipated to be visible off the project site. Therefore, project related impacts on PM_{10} will be less than significant.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Sensitive receptors include schools, day-care facilities, nursing homes, and residences. Since only a small number of construction vehicles and equipment are necessary for a short construction period (three weeks), and since water trucks will be used during project construction, project-related air quality impacts on adjacent residences will be less than significant.

e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Project construction will result in minor localized odors associated with fuel use for equipment and vehicles for the short construction duration (three weeks). These odors are common and not normally considered offensive. Therefore, odor impacts on adjacent residences will be less than significant.

2.3.4 Biological Resources

Issues and Supporting Information Sources		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of 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:

The project site vegetation was mapped in the summer of 1986. At a recent site visit (March, 2011) site photographs were taken and it was confirmed that the vegetation community is unchanged from 1986 conditions. The parcel is mapped as Rabbitbrush Scrub with 25 percent live cover and designated as Green Book Type B. For management purposes, the Water Agreement divides the vegetation of the Owens Valley floor into five management types classified as A, B, C, D, and E (Green Book, Inyo County and City of Los Angeles, 1990). Shrub communities with an estimated average annual evapotranspiration greater than estimated average precipitation within the quadrangle were classified as Type B. Once implemented, the project will be managed as a Type E parcel. All lands provided with surface water for irrigation, including enhancement/mitigation projects, recreation areas, wildlife habitats, stock water supplies, and water spreading areas, are classified as Type E (Inyo County and City of Los Angeles, 1990). Implementation of the project will require an amendment to the Big Pine Quadrangle Vegetation Management Map that is incorporated into the Agreement.

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project will not have a substantial adverse effect on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project will include the removal of all existing vegetation within the project area and seeding the site with a pasture mix.

Based on California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) listings for the Big Pine USGS quadrangle and other published records, the following sensitive species have the potential to occur on the project site:

- Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) (SSC)
- Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis)* (state endangered)
- Yellow-Breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) (CSC)
- Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)
- Cooper's Hawk *(Accipiter cooperii*)
- Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (state threatened)
- Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)
- Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townssendii*) (CSC; U.S. Forest Service sensitive)
- Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)
- Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) (CSC; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive)
- Borrego Parnopes Cuckoo Wasp (*Parnopes borregoensis*)
- Wong's Springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis wongi*)
- Northern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates pipiens*)
- Owens Pupfish (*Cyprinodon radiosus*)
- Owens Tui Chub (*Siphateles bicolor snyderi*)
- Sierra Nevada Big Horn Sheep (*Ovis Canadensis sierrae)* (federal endangered, state endangered)
- Owens Valley Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea covillei)* (state endangered)
- Inyo County Star-Tulip (*Calochortus excavatus*) (CSC)
- Inyo phacelia (*Phacelia inyoensis*)
- King's eyelash grass (*Blepharidachne kingii*)
- Nevada ocyctes (*Oryctes nevadensis*)
- Parish's popcorn-flower (*Plagiobothrys parishii*)
- Shockley's milk-vetch (*Astragalus serenoi var. shockleyi*)
- Wheeler's dune-broom (*Chaetadelpa wheeleri*)
- Coyote gilia (*Aliciella triodon*)
- Sagebrush loeflingia (*Loeflingia squarrosa var. artemisiarum*)

Sensitive Avian Species. No suitable nesting habitat exists on the project site for the following riparian dependent species: Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, or Summer Tanager. The few isolated cottonwoods along the ditch adjacent to Highway 395 provide limited foraging opportunities for migrants of these species. Long-eared Owls require dense vegetation for nesting, which is lacking at the site. The open, disturbed dry brush habitat provides only limited foraging opportunities for this species. Project implementation should increase the quality of available foraging habitat for this species, if present in the vicinity. The few isolated cottonwoods on and adjacent to the site do provide potential nesting opportunities for Swainson's Hawk. Loggerhead Shrike, a species of special concern, could potentially nest in the brush located in the project area (nesting season late-February thru June). Non-

native trees on the project site will be examined for the presence of active nests prior to removal. Surrounding trees subject to disturbance from project-related activities during the nesting season (April through July) will also be surveyed for the presence of active nests. If an active nest is found, and project construction will occur during the breeding season, the impact of project-related activities will be evaluated. Specific nest location and the type of activity planned will be considered. If construction is determined to potentially adversely impact sensitive avian species, project implementation will be delayed until the young have fledged. Therefore, impacts on sensitive avian species will be less than significant.

Sensitive Aquatic Species. Northern Leopard Frog and Owens Pupfish require a permanent source of water, which is lacking on site. There is a nearby but off-site existing ditch, which conveys water only during the irrigation season and therefore is not a permanent source that can be expected to support these species. Therefore, impacts on sensitive aquatic species will be less than significant.

Sensitive Bat Species. There is no suitable roosting habitat for bats on the project site. Pallid Bats, forage primarily by capturing large insects on the ground in open habitats, and thus may forage in the project area. Other sensitive bat species such as Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), Spotted Bat (*Eurderma maculatum*), and Western Red Bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) are not expected, but may occur while in transit to other higher quality foraging habitats. Therefore, impacts to sensitive bat species will be less than significant.

Sensitive Plant Species. Rare plants are not present within the project area. Records for *Sidalcea covillei, Calochortus excavatus, Phacelia inyoensis, Blepharidachne kingii, Oryctes nevadensis, Plagiobothrys parishii, Astragalus serenoi var. shockleyi, Chaetadelpha wheeleri, Aliciella triodon,* and *Loeflingia squarrosa var. artemisiarum* occur for the USGS quad sheet. However, since none of these species are present on the project site, the project will have no impact on sensitive plant species.

b) **No Impact.** The project site does not contain any riparian vegetation or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. No riparian vegetation will be disturbed during the sump installation. Therefore, the project will have no impact on sensitive habitat types.

c) **No Impact.** The project site does not contain wetlands or wetland vegetation. No riparian vegetation will be disturbed during the sump installation. Therefore, the project will have no impact on federally protected wetlands.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project will not 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 wildlife nursery sites. The small amount of water removed from Big Pine Canal to run the irrigation system for the project will not create a noticeable elevation change in the canal downstream of the project. Big Pine Canal has numerous input and outlet structures along it, and the addition of the pipeline and sump structure for the implementation of the proposed project will not create additional impacts to the canal or any resident or migratory wildlife. The proposed project will only temporarily disturb the site, and over time will improve the site. Therefore, impacts on wildlife corridors will be less than significant.

e) **No Impact.** This project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. The project site has been designated as an enhancement/mitigation project location and implementation of the proposed project is consistent with that designation.

f) **No Impact.** The project site does not fall within any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or state habitat conservation plan. LADWP is currently working with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The proposed project will not conflict the in-progress HCP.

2.3.5 Cultural Resources

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

In December 2004, URS Corporation (URS) was retained to conduct a cultural resources inventory of the proposed regreening area in the vicinity of Big Pine, Inyo County, California. Field work was conducted the week of December 13, 2004.

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Archaeological investigations were conducted by URS Corporation (URS, 2005). Two historical sites containing artifacts from dumping events were documented within the project area. A formal evaluation of the significance of the two sites has not been conducted. The two sites will be avoided during ground disturbing activities associated with the project. Therefore, since the sites will be avoided, the project will not cause substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

b) **No Impact.** No archaeological resources were delineated during the site evaluations. Therefore, the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource.

c) **No Impact.** The project will not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or unique geologic feature. There are no known paleontological resources or unique geologic features existing on the project site (URS, 2005).

d) **No Impact.** Human remains are not known for the project site. Construction at the project site necessary for installation of the irrigation system is not anticipated to disturb human remains. However, in the unlikely event that evidence of human remains is found, all work shall cease and an archaeological consultant will evaluate the findings in accordance with standard practices and applicable regulations. The County Coroner and an appropriate local tribal representative will be informed and consulted as required by State law.

2.3.6 Geology and Soils

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to 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 risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

The project area is located in eastern California, in the town of Big Pine in the Owens Valley. The Owens Valley of eastern California is a deep north-south trending basin, lying between the Sierra Nevada to the west and the White-Inyo Mountains to the east. The Owens Valley was formed as a fault block basin with the valley floor dropped down relative to the mountain blocks on either side.

The Owens Valley is the westernmost basin in a geologic province known as the Basin and Range, a region of fault-bounded, closed basins separated by parallel mountain ranges stretching from central Utah to the Sierra Nevada and encompassing all of the state of Nevada. Geological formations in the project areas are of Cenozoic age, chiefly Quaternary.

The soils in Owens Valley contain mostly Quaternary alluvial fan, basin-fill, and lacustrine deposits (Miles and Goudy, 1997).

The project area is mapped as Hesperia-Cartago complex soils with 0 to 5 percent slopes. The soil is very deep and well drained with moderately rapid permeability (NRCS, 2002).

a) **Less than Significant Impact.** The project area is located within U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles containing delineated Alquist-Priolo special studies zones (California Geological Survey). Surface rupture on these faults is also possible outside of the currently mapped active traces of these range-front faults in the vicinity of the project sites. Since habitable structures will not be built as part of the proposed project, people will not be exposed to adverse effects involving seismic ground shaking. The project area has relatively little slope which reduces the possibility of landslides. Since failure of project facilities related to seismic events would be easily repaired, the project will have a less than significant impact related to seismic hazards.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project includes minor soil disturbance related to installation of the sump, sprinkler irrigation, and fencing. Since all appropriate BMPs will be utilized during construction to prevent erosion and the loss of topsoil, project construction will have a less than significant impact on soil erosion. Project operation will increase vegetative cover and therefore soil stabilization on the project site - a beneficial impact.

c) **No Impact.** Soils within the project area have a slope of 0 to 5 percent and are classified as very deep soils. Liquefaction is unlikely at the project site. Habitable structures will not be built as part of the proposed project. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts from unstable soils.

d) **No Impact.** Habitable structures will not be built as part of the proposed project. The soils mapped in the adjacent areas have low concentrations of clay. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts from expansive soils.

e) **No Impact.** Sanitation facilities are not present or proposed for the project site. There will be no impact on soils related to wastewater disposal.

2.3.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	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:

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** GBUAPCD has not identified a significance threshold from GHG emissions. Project related emissions of GHGs will be limited to air pollutants generated during the temporary (approximately three weeks) construction period. Construction emissions will result from operation of a backhoe, small crane, mower, flatbed truck, pump mechanic trucks, concrete transit mixer, power pole setting truck, equipment service truck, and four pickup trucks. Based on the number of vehicles and equipment, the intermittent nature of their use, and the short construction duration, greenhouse gas emissions from construction would be minimal and less than significant. Operations-related air pollutant emissions will result from infrequent vehicle trips to the project site – similar to existing conditions. Since operation of the project will not increase air pollutant emissions over existing conditions, and since increased vegetative cover on 30 acres could result in a minor reduction of atmospheric CO2, the project will have a less than significant impact on GHG emissions and therefore climate change.

b) **No Impact.** The following policies and regulations are relevant to climate change in California:

- **State of California Assembly Bill 32 –** California Global Warming Solutions Act - Assembly Bill (AB) 32, *California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, was signed into law on September 27, 2006. With the Governor's signing of AB 32, the Health and Safety Code (Section 38501, Subdivision (a)) now states the following: *"Global warming poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. The potential adverse impacts of global warming include the exacerbation of air quality problems, a reduction in the quality and supply of water to the state from the Sierra snowpack, a rise in sea levels resulting in the displacement of thousands of coastal businesses and residences, damage to marine ecosystems and the natural environment, and an increase in the incidences of infectious diseases, asthma, and other human health-related problems."*

  AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB), in coordination with State agencies as well as members of the private and academic communities, to adopt regulations to require the reporting and verification of

statewide greenhouse gas emissions and to monitor and enforce compliance with this program. Under the provisions of the bill, by 2020, statewide greenhouse gas emissions will be limited to the equivalent emission levels in 1990.

- **State of California Senate Bill 375 -** On September 30, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill (SB) 375, which seeks to reduce GHG emissions by discouraging sprawl development and dependence on car travel. SB 375 helps implement the AB 32 GHG reduction goals by integrating land use, regional transportation and housing planning.

As an enhancement/mitigation project which will increase vegetative cover on the project site, the proposed project is consistent with GHG policies and regulations. Therefore, there is no impact on these policies and regulations.

2.3.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

Construction of the proposed project will require occasional transport of limited quantities of fuel. Fuel will be used for vehicles and power equipment. Fuel will be contained within the manufacturer's tanks on all powered heavy equipment onsite, or in approved canisters for powered hand equipment. When necessary, a fuel/service truck will visit the site, parking at a non-sensitive location such as a road shoulder on level ground. Equipment operators will move all mobile equipment to the fuel/service truck for refueling. No fuel will be stored onsite at the project location.

a and b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** As is the current practice by LADWP, use of fuels for construction will be carefully monitored to limit exposure of humans or environmental receptors. Therefore, impacts related to release or accidental exposure to humans or the environment will be less than significant.

c) **No Impact.** There are no schools within ¼ mile of the project site. Hazardous materials use will be limited to fuels. Since fuels will be properly handled, there will be no impact on the schools from hazardous materials.

d) **No Impact.** Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to update a list of known hazardous materials sites, which is also called the "Cortese List." The sites on the Cortese List are designated by the State Water Resources Control Board, the Integrated Waste Management Board, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control. The proposed project site is not located in an area included on a hazardous materials site list.

e and f) **No Impact.** The project area is not located sufficiently near either a private airstrip or public airport to pose a safety risk. There will be no project-related impacts on airport safety.

g) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Due to the small numbers of personnel and equipment needed for project construction, project-related traffic will have a less than significant impact on emergency access and evacuation plans.

h) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Project implementation will increase vegetation at the project site and therefore may result in a minor increase in the volume of potential fuel for fires. However, the project site will be grazed which will serve to manage the volume of vegetation on-site. Additionally, the project site is located on LADWP land subject to LADWP's fire management strategies. Therefore, impacts related to wildland fires will be less than significant.

2.3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

The Inyo County Water Department performed an analysis on potential effects of groundwater pumping to supply the Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project (Inyo County Water Department, 2010. See Appendix B.) To evaluate the effects of different pumping locations on the water table, the USGS regional groundwater model for the Owens Valley (USGS Water Supply Paper 2370-H, 1998) was used to examine the effect of project pumping on water table elevations in the Big Pine area (Inyo County Water Department, 2010).

Pumping was simulated from three different locations: the regreening project site, the town supply well, and Well W375. For each location, draw down resulting from 10 years of project operation was simulated, holding all other inputs to the model constant.

The results of the analysis indicate that, of the options considered, the least likely to have an adverse impact is pumping from Well W375. The predicted drawdown from W375 is too small to measurably affect the phreatophytic communities in the vicinity of the well, and is therefore considered insignificant. The results of this study were presented by the Technical Group to the Standing Committee at a public meeting in November, 2010. Local citizens were able to comment on the proposed project.

a), f) **Less than Significant Impact.** Beneficial uses and water quality objectives are specified in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan) prepared by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board, 2005). Relevant to the project site, beneficial uses designated for Big Pine Canal are municipal and domestic supply, agricultural supply, groundwater recharge, water contact recreation, noncontact water recreation, commercial and sportfishing, cold freshwater habitat, and wildlife habitat. Waterbody-specific numeric objectives for the protection of these beneficial uses are not specified in the Basin Plan for Big Pine Canal.

During project construction, minor disturbance will occur in Big Pine Canal to install the 4 ft x 4 ft x 5 ft concrete basin. Best Management Practices for construction activities will be utilized to minimize sediment impacts to the Canal. Additionally, minor soil disturbances will occur during installation of the irrigation system and site fencing. Since the volume of soil to be disturbed under the project is minor, and the construction duration is short (estimated at three weeks), increases in sediment load in stormwater will not adversely affect surface water beneficial uses. The project does not propose and will not result in other waste discharges. During project operation, irrigation water will remain on site. Therefore, impacts on water quality will be less than significant. Waste Discharge Requirements are not relevant to the proposed agricultural activity.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project will not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. As documented by Inyo County, the additional pumping of W375 to provide up to 150 acre-feet per year of make-up water from the implementation of the project will have insignificant effects on the local groundwater table (Inyo County Water Department July, 2010). Therefore, project-related impacts on groundwater will be less than significant.

c), d) **No Impact.** Project construction will include minor site cleanup and preparation for seeding; no berms or other obstructions to stormwater flow are proposed. Installation of the proposed sump will not alter the course of Big Pine Canal. Therefore, the proposed project will not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

e) **No Impact**. Stormwater flows across the project site and infiltrates or enters existing surface water features. Since the project will not alter the volume of stormflows, and since engineered stormdrains are not present on the project site and are not proposed, there will be no impact on the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. Since the regreening project will increase vegetative cover on the project site, erosion will be reduced over existing conditions, a beneficial impact on stormwater quality.

g), h) and i) **No Impact.** The proposed project will not place housing or structures that will impede flows within the flood plain, or create levees or dams. No levees or dams are present on the project sites and no off-site levees or dams will be modified as part of project implementation. The project will have no impact on housing or structures in a 100-year flood hazard area.

j) **Less than Significant Impact.** Due to the distance to large surface water features from the project site, seiche and tsunami are not relevant for the proposed project. However, mudflows originating at higher elevations above the project area and then moving across the site is a possible phenomenon, however, this is highly unlikely. Since no habitable structures are planned as part of the project, people will not be exposed to injury or death from mudflows. Since the damage could be readily repaired by re-installing the irrigation system and sump, the impact will be less than significant.

2.3.10 Land Use and Planning

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) **No Impact.** The proposed project is located in an area zoned for open space and used for ranching, wildlife habitat, and recreation. No habitable structures are located on the property, and none are planned as part of the proposed project. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts on established communities.

b) **No Impact.** The Inyo County General Plan (2001) includes Goal BIO-1: Maintain and enhance biological diversity and healthy ecosystems through the County. Policy BIO-1.2 calls for the preservation of riparian habitat and wetlands and Policy BIO-1.3 calls for the restoration of biodiversity. Since regreening the project site will enhance vegetation and aesthetics, the project will be consistent with these General Plan goal and policies. Accordingly, there will be no adverse impacts on applicable land use plans and policies.

c) **No Impact.** There are no Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) as determined by CDFG at the project site, and there are no adopted habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans for this site. Therefore, there will be no impact on any other adopted habitat plan or natural community conservation plan. LADWP is currently working with the United Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The proposed project will not conflict with the in-progress HCP.

2.3.11 Mineral Resources

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) and b) **No Impact.** There is no existing mining activity at the project site. The project site is not a locally-important mineral resource recovery site. Implementation of the proposed project will not limit future mineral recovery activities or result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources. Therefore, there will be no project-related impact on mineral resources.

2.3.12 Noise

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) and d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Houses are located adjacent to the project site and construction noise may be temporarily noticeable by some residents or persons walking along Big Pine Canal. Noise generating equipment that will be used to construct project facilities will include a backhoe, small crane, mower, flatbed truck, pump mechanic trucks, concrete transit mixers, power pole setting truck, equipment service truck and pick-ups. Since project construction will be limited to daylight hours for approximately three weeks, and since the project area is adjacent to Highway 395 (a greater noise source to adjacent residences), project-related noise impacts will be temporary and less than significant.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Since jackhammers or other equipment that causes substantial groundborne vibration will not be used for project construction, the proposed project will not substantially increase the exposure of persons to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project will cause a temporary (approximately three weeks) increase in noise levels above background conditions. However, after construction, noise generation at the project site will be the same

as for other grazing operations in the vicinity (noise related to vehicle travel for period site visits and maintenance). Therefore, impacts during project operation on ambient noise levels will be less than significant.

e) and f) **No Impact.** The project area is not located sufficiently near either a private airstrip or public airport to expose people residing or working in the area to experience excessive noise levels. There will be no project-related impacts on noise near an active airport/airstrip.

2.3.13 Population and Housing

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial 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 housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) through c) **No Impact.** Habitable structures are not present on the project site and none are proposed as part of the project. The project does not expand utility service or necessitate the development of additional infrastructure beyond the proposed site irrigation system. Therefore, there will be no impacts on population and housing from implementation of the proposed project.

2.3.14 Public Services

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

Discussion:

a) **No Impact.** Habitable structures are not present on the project site and none are proposed as part of the project. Recreation use and the subsequent need for police services will be the same as existing conditions. The project is not growth inducing and does not create structures that would require additional fire protection. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts on fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities.

2.3.15 Recreation

	Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	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:

a) and b) **No Impact.** Habitable structures and recreational facilities are not present on the project site and none are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, the project will not result in population increases that will subsequently increase the use of park and recreational facilities. Therefore, the project will have no impact on recreation or recreational facilities.

2.3.16 Transportation and Traffic

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) and b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction of the project will result in approximately eight construction vehicles and 10 to 15 workers traveling to the project site over a three week period. However, there will be no impact on traffic patterns from construction in the town of Big Pine. The temporary increase in traffic in and around the project site is limited and temporary and will have a less than significant impact.

c) **No Impact.** The project area is not located sufficiently near either a private airstrip or public airport, nor does the project contain features that will alter air traffic patterns. No impacts on air safety will occur.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Substantial roadway alterations are not proposed as part of the project. The existing roadways will continue to be suitable for their existing uses and no new roadway hazards will be created. The impact will have a less than significant impact on roadway hazards.

e) **No Impact.** Roadway alterations are not proposed as part of the project and access to the project sites will not be altered. There will be no impact on emergency access.

f) **No Impact.** The project does not include housing, employment, or roadway improvements relevant to alternative transportation measures. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts on alternative transportation.

2.3.17 Utilities and Service Systems

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statues and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion:

a) through c) and e) through g) **No Impact.** The project does not include or induce housing or employment which will result in the need for public services and utilities. There will be no project-related impacts on public utilities and service systems.

c) **No Impact.** There is no plumbed potable water serving the project sites. The project will have no impact on water utility service.

2.3.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	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, effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

a) **Less than Significant Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project has the potential to temporarily disturb wildlife on the project site due to noise and human presence. Additionally, historic resources are known for the project site. However, since significant disturbance to active bird nests will be avoided during project construction and since historic resources will be avoided by project design, impacts on habitat and cultural resources will be less than significant. Overall, regreening of the 30-acre project parcel will have a beneficial impact on vegetation.

b) **No Impact.** Regreening of the 30-acre project parcel will have a beneficial impact on aesthetics of the project area – a long-term environmental goal. Implementation of the proposed project will not achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.

c) **Less than Significant Impact.** There are no known projects in the immediate area of the project site that will have overlapping construction schedules with the proposed project. Therefore, cumulative construction-related impacts on air quality, noise, and traffic will be less than significant. Along with other enhancement/mitigation projects in the Owens Valley, the project will have a beneficial impact on aesthetics.

d) **Less than Significant Impact.** Regreening of the 30-acre project parcel will have a beneficial impact on aesthetics of the project area. Temporary and minor noise and air

pollutant emission during the three weeks of project construction will have less than significant adverse effects on human beings.

Section 3
References, Abbreviations and Report Preparation

3.1 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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3.2 ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APE	Area of Potential Effect
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CAT	Climate Action Team
CCRI	Climate Change Research Initiative
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
City	City of Los Angeles
DWR	Department of Water Resources
Farmland	Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance
GCDIS	Global Change Data and Information System
GCRIO	Global Change Research Information Office
GBUAPCD	Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
IS	Initial Study
LADWP	(City of) Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAST	National Assessment and Synthesis Team
ND	Negative Declaration
PM_{10}	particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter
SIP	state implementation plan
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SNA	Significant Natural Areas
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
USCCSP	U.S. Climate Change Science Program
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGCRP	U.S. Global Change Research Program
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

3.3 PREPARERS OF THE INITIAL STUDY

PREPARED BY

Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
Environmental Services

Environmental Lead:
Nancy Chung
111 N. Hope Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Project Lead:
Lori Gillem
300 Mandich Street
Bishop, CA 93514

APPENDIX A

FINAL SCOPING DOCUMENT

"REGREENING NORTHEAST OF BIG PINE"

IRRIGATED PASTURE
J&L LIVESTOCK--RLI-483 - BIG PINE AREA

AS AN

ENHANCEMENT/MITIGATION PROJECT

Introduction

The Technical Group has prepared this report to assist the Standing Committee in evaluating the "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" enhancement/mitigation project.

1. Need

   To enhance the aesthetics and regreen abandoned agricultural lands northeasterly of Big Pine, and adjacent to the residential area.

2. Description

   Water will be supplied from the southwest corner of Poplar Street and U.S. Highway 395 through an existing culvert under the highway to the project area. New ditches and check structures, designed by the Department and installed by the lessee (J&L Livestock), will be used to flood irrigate up to 30 acres of new pasture.

3. Scope

   The Department will design, engineer, purchase all necessary materials, and approve of the construction of the project.

   The lessee (J&L Livestock) will be responsible for the following:

   a. Any and all clearing, cleanup or leveling of the project area.

   b. Installation of any and all water conveyance facilities on the site, including checks or control structures.

   c. Installation of all fencing materials.

   d. Prepare, seed and irrigate to germinate a suitable pasture over the parcel.

   e. Irrigate the pasture, and maintain and operate all ditches, conveyances and checks for the life of the project.

4. Water Supply

   Water for the project will come from Big Pine Creek via the proposed Big Pine Ditch System, and/or Baker Creek via the

proposed Mendenhall Park Ditch, existing ditches, or some combination of the above to the southwest corner of Poplar Street and U.S. Highway 395, then under the highway through an existing culvert to a ditch or pipeline to the westerly edge of the project area. The new pasture will be supplied up to 150 acre feet annually from existing E/M well No. 375 in the Big Pine area. The method of application will be normal surface field irrigation practices (flood irrigation).

5. Effectiveness of Project

Providing water for this pasture will greatly enhance the area and mitigate the impacts caused by abandoned agriculture.

6. Impact of Project

This project will create no adverse impact to the environment, and will increase livestock grazing capacity in the area.

7. Cost

The lessee will be reimbursed for all of his expenses for development of the project. Estimated total cost: $40,000

8. CEQA Requirements

Cat. Exempt.

INYO/LOS ANGELES STANDING COMMITTEE

Dedicated to the advancement of mutual cooperation

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 27, 2010

To: Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee

From: Inyo/Los Angeles Technical Group

Subject: Revised Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project

Background

The *Final Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" Irrigated Pasture J&L Livestock—RLI-483 – Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project* (1988 Final Scoping Document - attached) was completed and approved by the Standing Committee in September 1988. Revegetation of approximately 30 acres of pasture northeast of Big Pine is also included as a mitigation measure in the 1991 Environmental Impact Report on *Water from the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Los Angeles Aqueduct.*

The 1988 Final Scoping Document included brief descriptions of the need, methods, scope of work, and other information relating to the Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Project. Since the 1988 Final Scoping Document was adopted by the Standing Committee, conditions associated with the project have changed. The Technical Group recognizes that these changes in circumstance necessitate a revision to the 1988 Final Scoping Document in order to facilitate the project. The changes recommended by the Technical Group are described below and included in a Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project (attached)

Key Modifications to the 1988 Final Scoping Document include:

- Changing the lessee designation from J&L Livestock to an undesignated lessee
- Revising the boundaries the project as shown on the attached map.
- Amending the water supply source and method of application identified for the project

Long-Term Water Agreement Section V.C provides that:

Certain town supply wells, irrigation supply wells, fish hatchery supply wells, enhancement/mitigation project supply wells, and other wells not affecting areas with groundwater dependent vegetation may be designated by the Technical Group as exempt from automatic turn-off.

Revised Final Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine"

August 27, 2010

Introduction

The Technical Group has prepared this report to assist the Standing Committee in evaluating the Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Enhancement/Mitigation Project.

1. Need

   To enhance the aesthetics and regreen abandoned agricultural lands northeasterly of Big Pine and adjacent to the residential area.

2. Description

   Project will be irrigated pasture located on up to 30 acres of land northeast of Big Pine, California (see attached map). Irrigation water will be supplied by flood irrigation using best management practices or by sprinkler irrigation. The irrigation system will be designed by LADWP and installed by LADWP or lessee.

3. Scope

   LADWP will design, engineer, purchase materials, and construct or approve construction of the project. Lessee will be responsible for: any and all clearing, cleanup, or leveling of the project area; installation, operation, and maintenance of on site water conveyances and irrigation equipment; installation of fencing; prepare, seed, and irrigate project area in order to germinate and maintain a suitable pasture.

4. Water Supply

   Water for the project will come from the Big Pine Creek via the Big Pine Ditch System or the BPIIA Ditch, or Baker Creek via the Mendenhall Park Ditch, or Baker Return Ditch, or the Big Pine Canal, or a combination of these sources. The project will be supplied with up to 150 acre-feet of water per year. Surface water supplied to the project from the above-named sources will be made up by pumping Well W375 in an amount equivalent to that supplied to the project on an annual basis.

5. Effectiveness of Project

   Providing water for this pasture will greatly enhance the area and mitigate the impacts caused by abandoned agriculture.

6. Impact of Project

   It is anticipated that this enhancement/mitigation project will have an overall beneficial impact.

7. Cost

   Cost of the project installation will be borne by LADWP. Estimated cost to be determined

8. CEQA Requirements

   LADWP will complete CEQA requirements.

AGENDA

INYO COUNTY/LOS ANGELES STANDING COMMITTEE

10:00 A.M.
August 27, 2010

Board of Supervisors Room, County Administrative Center
224 North Edwards
Independence, California

The public will be offered the opportunity to comment on each agenda item prior to any Action on the item by the Standing Committee or, in the absence of action, prior to the Committee moving to the next item on the agenda. The public will also be offered the Opportunity to address the Committee on any matter within the Committee's jurisdiction Prior to adjournment of the meeting.

1. Field trip – Blackrock Waterfowl Habitat Area and Vegetation Parcel Blackrock 94
2. Documentation of actions from May 6, 2010 meeting
3. Report on 2010-11 Operations Plan
4. **Action**: Adoption of revised scoping document for enhancement/mitigation project "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine."
5. Report on proposed revision to Green Book, Section III.C.5 Plant Recruitment Studies.
6. Report on Lower Owens River Project Seasonal Habitat Flow
7. Report on Green Book revision effort.
8. Report on the Water Agreement land releases
9. Report on the Owens Lake Groundwater Study
10. Public Comment
11. Schedule for future Standing Committee meetings
12. Adjourn

INYO/LOS ANGELES STANDING COMMITTEE

Dedicated to the advancement of mutual cooperation

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 4, 2010

To: Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee

From: Inyo/Los Angeles Technical Group

Subject: Revised Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project

Background

The *Final Scoping Document "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine" Irrigated Pasture J&L Livestock—RLI-483 – Big Pine Area as an Enhancement/Mitigation Project* (1988 Final Scoping Document - attached) was completed and approved by the Standing Committee in September 1988. Revegetation of approximately 30 acres of pasture northeast of Big Pine is also included as a mitigation measure in the 1991 Environmental Impact Report on *Water from the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Los Angeles Aqueduct*.

The 1988 Final Scoping Document included brief descriptions of the need, methods, scope of work, and other information relating to the Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Project. Since the 1988 Final Scoping Document was adopted by the Standing Committee, conditions associated with the project have changed. The Technical Group recognizes that these changes in circumstance necessitate a revision to the 1988 Final Scoping Document in order to facilitate the project. The changes recommended by the Technical Group are described below and included in a Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project (attached)

Key Modifications to the 1988 Final Scoping Document include:

- Changing the lessee designation from J&L Livestock to an undesignated lessee
- Revising the boundaries the project as shown on the attached map.
- Amending the water supply source and method of application identified for the project

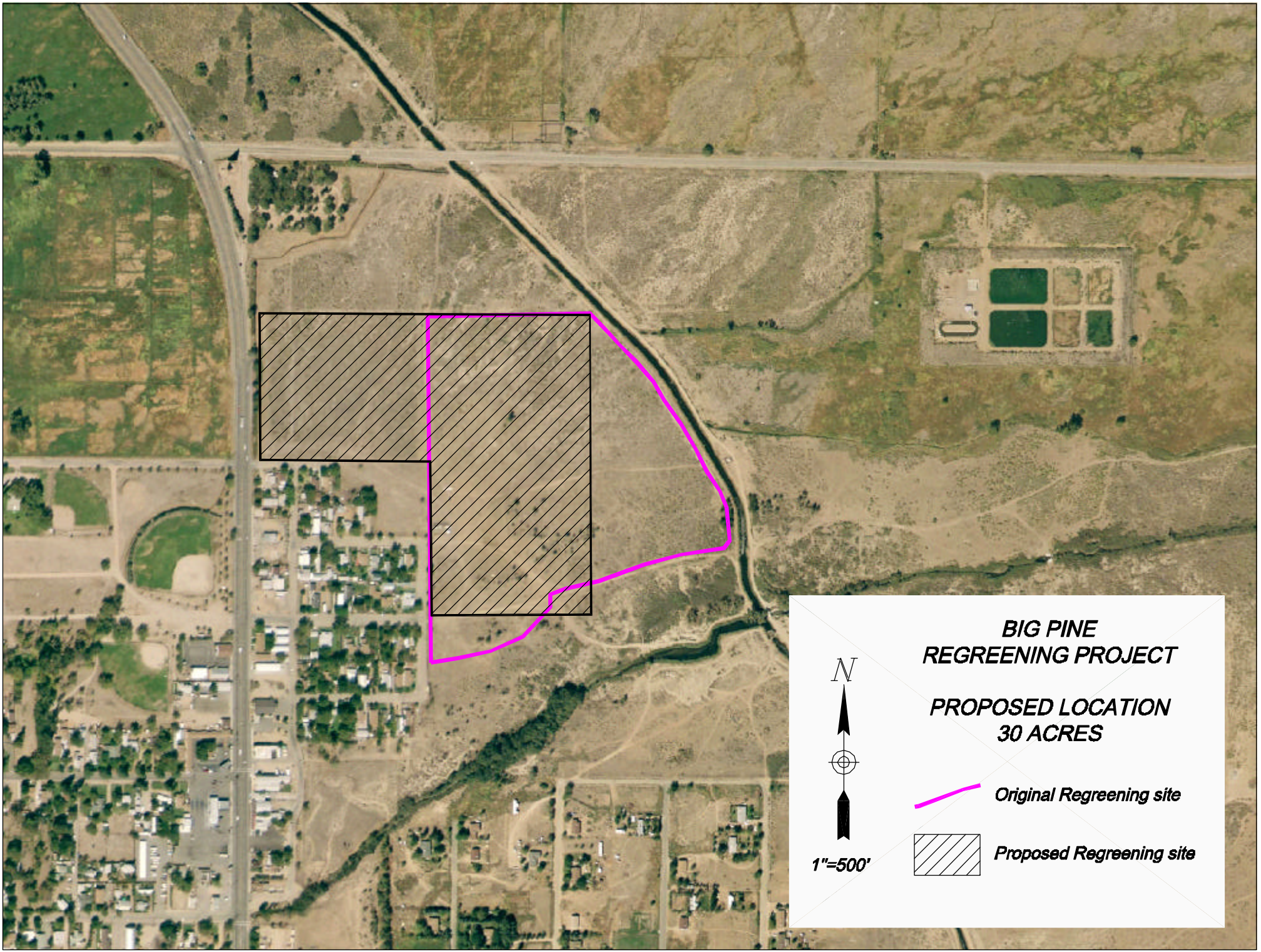
Long-Term Water Agreement Section V.C provides that:

Certain town supply wells, irrigation supply wells, fish hatchery supply wells, enhancement/mitigation project supply wells, and other wells not affecting areas with groundwater dependent vegetation may be designated by the Technical Group as exempt from automatic turn-off.

The Technical Group has analyzed the operation of Well W375 and concluded that an exemption for up to 150 acre-feet per year would have no significant impact on the environment or other well owners. The Technical Group will exempt well W375 for up to 150 acre-feet per year, not to exceed uses on the project, contingent on completion of CEQA for this project, to provide make-up water for water supplied to the project as described in the attached Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project. Make-up water will be pumped on an annual basis.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Standing Committee adopt the Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project as a replacement to the 1988 Final Scoping Document.


BIG PINE
REGREENING PROJECT
PROPOSED LOCATION
30 ACRES
N
1"=500'
Original Regreening site
Proposed Regreening site

AGENDA

INYO COUNTY/LOS ANGELES STANDING COMMITTEE

1:00 P.M.
November 4, 2010

Elks Lodge
151 E. Line St.
Bishop, California

The public will be offered the opportunity to comment on each agenda item prior to any Action on the item by the Standing Committee or, in the absence of action, prior to the Committee moving to the next item on the agenda. The public will also be offered the Opportunity to address the Committee on any matter within the Committee's jurisdiction Prior to adjournment of the meeting.

1. Documentation of actions from August 27, 2010 meeting

2. **Action**: Reconsideration of adoption of modified scoping document for enhancement/mitigation project "Regreening Northeast of Big Pine."

3. Report on Green Book update

    a. Green Book Section III.C.5, Plant Recruitment Studies
    b. Green Book revision effort

4. Report on Well Exemptions

    a. Temporary exemption of W377 to supply stockwater in Laws
    b. Exempt well list

5. Report on the Water Agreement land releases

6. Report on the Owens Lake Groundwater Study

7. Owens Lakebed Master Plan process

8. Public Comment

9. Schedule for Future Standing Committee meetings

10. Adjourn

INYO/LOS ANGELES STANDING COMMITTEE

Dedicated to the advancement of mutual cooperation

MEMORANDUM

Date November 4, 2010

Subject: Agenda Item #1: Documentation of Actions Taken by Standing Committee at August 27, 2010 Meeting

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The Standing Committee's policy is to document any actions taken by the Committee in a memorandum at the subsequent meeting. The following actions were taken at the May 6, 2010 Standing Committee meeting:

Item 4. The Standing Committee adopted the Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project as a replacement to the 1988 Final Scoping Document.

The Technical Group has analyzed the operation of Well W375 and concluded that an exemption for up to 150 acre-feet per year would have no significant impact on the environment or other well owners. The Technical Group will exempt well W375 for up to 150 acre-feet per year, not to exceed uses on the project, contingent on completion of CEQA for this project, to provide make-up water for water supplied to the project as described in the attached Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Standing Committee adopt the Revised Final Scoping Document, Regreening Northeast of Big Pine, Irrigated Pasture – Big Pine Area, Enhancement/Mitigation Project as a replacement to the 1988 Final Scoping Document.

APPENDIX B

(760) 878-0001
FAX: (760) 878-2552

EMAIL: mail@inyowater.org
WEB: http://www.inyowater.org

P.O. Box 337
135 South Jackson Street
Independence, CA 93526

COUNTY OF INYO
WATER DEPARTMENT

July 23, 2010

TO: Los Angeles Technical Group members

FROM: Inyo County Technical Group members

SUBJECT: Effects of groundwater pumping to supply the Northeast Big Pine Regreening mitigation project

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INTRODUCTION. The Regreening Northeast of Big Pine Project was approved by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee as an enhancement/mitigation project in 1988. The project consists of irrigating 30 acres of abandoned agricultural land with the goal of enhancing the aesthetics of the area. This project was adopted as a mitigation measure in the 1991 Final Environmental Impact Report for Water From the Owens Valley to Supply the Second Aqueduct (FEIR). The scoping document approved by the Standing Committee identified the water supply for the project as coming from Big Pine Creek via the Big Pine Ditch System, Baker Creek via Mendenhall Ditch, existing ditches, or some combination thereof. The scoping document also described that the project will be supplied with up to 150 acre-feet per year (afy) from well W375. FEIR Table 4-3 allocates 750 afy to the project, but this appears to be a typographical error. Based on this description of the water supply for the project, it appears that the Standing Committee intended for the project to be supplied from surface water conveyances near the project, and that an equivalent amount of water would be pumped from W375 to make up the water supplied to the project.

The Technical Group has discussed modifications to the project described in the scoping document, including alternative locations for pumping make-up water. To evaluate the effects of different pumping locations on the water table, the USGS regional groundwater model for the Owens Valley (documented in USGS Water Supply Paper 2370-H, 1998) was used to examine the effect of project pumping on water table elevations in the Big Pine area.

METHOD. Pumping was simulated from three different locations: the regreening project site, the town supply well, and Well W375 (Figure 1). For each location, drawdown resulting from ten years of project operation was simulated, holding all other inputs to the model constant. During each year, 150 acre-feet were withdrawn over a six-month period, followed by six months of recovery. 150 acre-feet

of pumping over a six-month period is equal to a pumping rate of 0.4148 cubic-feet per second (cfs). In reality, pumping rates would vary over the course of the irrigation season; for example, W375 could pump 150 acre-feet in about two weeks if operated at full capacity. Although pumping schedules may vary from the schedule simulated, the overall effect of withdrawing 150 afy would be similar to the simulated effect. Simulations were initiated from a steady-state condition based on 2008 pumping rates and average recharge. Pumping at the project site and from the town supply well was apportioned between the upper and lower model layers based on aquifer transmissivity. This resulted in 90% of pumpage being withdrawn from the lower layer at the project site, and 60% of pumpage being withdrawn from the lower aquifer at the town supply well. 100% of pumpage from W375 was withdrawn from the lower model layer, because W375 is screened from 260 to 440 feet below ground surface and sealed above the well screen. Hydrographs were simulated for each well location, and for the Big Pine Paiute Tribe Reservation (BPPTR).

RESULTS. Figure 2 shows simulated drawdown at the regreening project site and the BPPTR resulting from pumping from a well at the regreening project site. Simulated drawdown does not exceed 0.4 ft at the BPPTR, and does not exceed 1.0 ft at the project site. Drawdown at monitoring site BP1 would be similar to the project site. Figure 1 shows that native phreatophytic vegetation is adjacent to the project site, therefore, the maximum drawdown such vegetation would be subjected to would be 1.0 ft with seasonal recovery to less than 0.5 ft of drawdown. Approximately eight years after pumping begins, simulated drawdown equilibrates (i.e., the annual decline ceases). Operation of well W210 has been discussed by the Technical Group as an alternative source of water for the project. W210 would produce a drawdown pattern similar to a well located at the project site.

Figure 3 shows simulated drawdown resulting from using the town supply well, W341, to supply the town system with 150 afy of additional water. Maximum simulated drawdown at the town well site is less than 4.3 ft, and maximum simulated drawdown at the BPPTR is less than 0.3 ft. A replacement for W341 has been constructed nearby. It is not known that either W341 or the replacement well (W415) has sufficient additional capacity to accommodate supplying the regreening project. Approximately eight years after pumping begins, simulated drawdown equilibrates.

Figure 4 shows simulated drawdown resulting from pumping W375 to provide make-up water for the water supplied to the project. The hydrographs in Figure 4 appear angular because the groundwater model output has a maximum resolution of 0.01 ft. Maximum simulated water table drawdown at W375 is less than 0.2 ft, and maximum simulated drawdown at BPPTR is less than 0.25 ft. Approximately eight years after pumping begins, drawdown equilibrates. After two years, water table drawdown at the BPPTR exceeds drawdown at W375. This results from W375 withdrawing water from the deeper aquifer and a high degree of aquifer confinement at W375. Operational testing conducted on W375, in which the well was pumped continuously for several months, did not induce measureable drawdown in the shallow aquifer, consistent with these model results.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION. The regional groundwater model that these results are based on has a coarse spatial resolution, generalized hydraulic parameters, and simplified hydrologic processes. The results presented here are approximations, and the response of the actual system will

likely be different by an unknown amount. The effect of stream capture by pumping wells and the effect of irrigation return flow to the shallow aquifer were not simulated. If these effects were included in the model, predicted drawdown would be reduced. Reducing the irrigation duty for the project from 150 afy to 90 afy, as has been discussed by the Technical Group, would proportionally reduce pumping and resultant drawdown. It is not clear that such a reduction would provide adequate water for the project to succeed. Pumping effects from other wells not simulated here are additive to the effects resulting from regreening project pumping.

Among the water supply options considered, the least likely to have an adverse impact is pumping from W375. This option produced the least drawdown at BPPTR and will have negligible effect on riparian areas west of Big Pine. Drawdown induced by pumping W341 (Figure 3) could potentially affect groundwater dependent vegetation growing along stream channels and fault scarps west of Big Pine. Drawdown induced by a well at the regreening project site indicates that a well located at the site poses little risk to phreatophytic vegetation, but slightly higher drawdown is predicted than for W375. The predicted drawdown from W375 is too small to measurably affect the phreatophytic communities in the vicinity of the well (Figure 4), and is therefore considered insignificant. The Water Department recommends that W375 be exempt to provide up to 150 afy as make up water for water supplied to the regreening project.

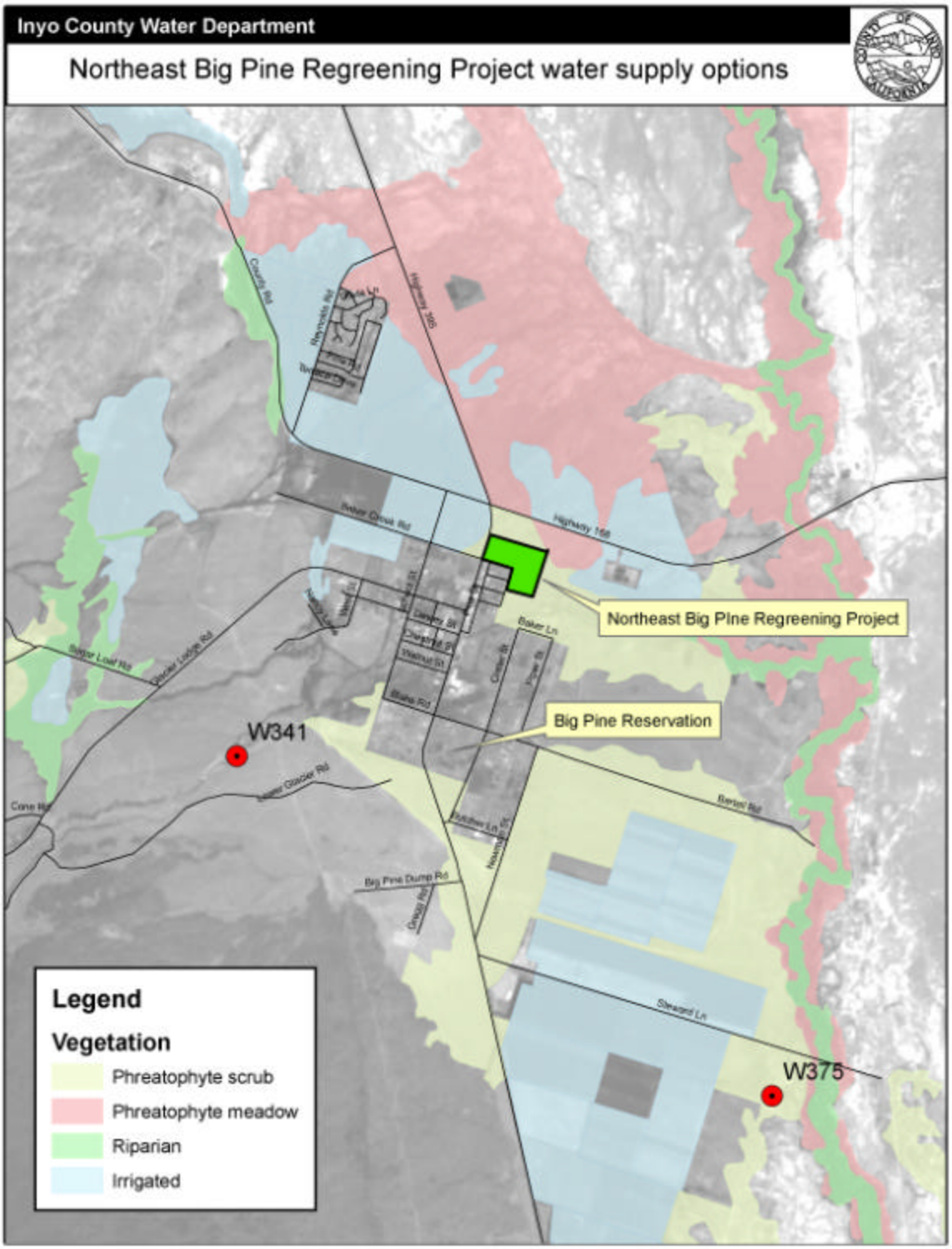
Inyo County Water Department
Northeast Big Pine Regreening Project water supply options
Northeast Big Pine Regreening Project
Big Pine Reservation
W341
W375
Legend
Vegetation
Phreatophyte scrub
Phreatophyte meadow
Riparian
Irrigated
Highway 168
Baker Ln
Sugar Loaf Rd
Glacier Lodge Rd
Big Pine Dump Rd
Steward Ln

Figure 1. Location map. Existing wells W375 and W341 are shown. Vegetation map is for LADWP lands only.

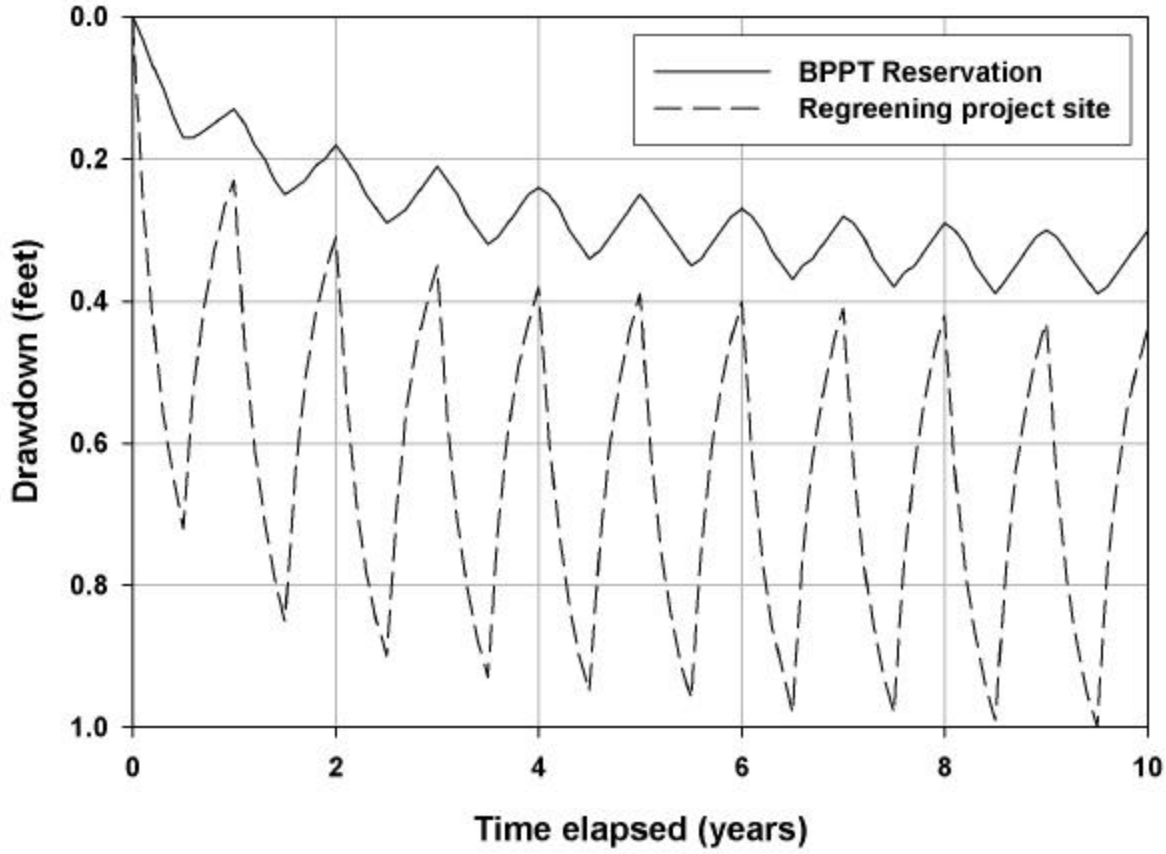

Figure 2. Simulated drawdown resulting from a well located at regreening project site.

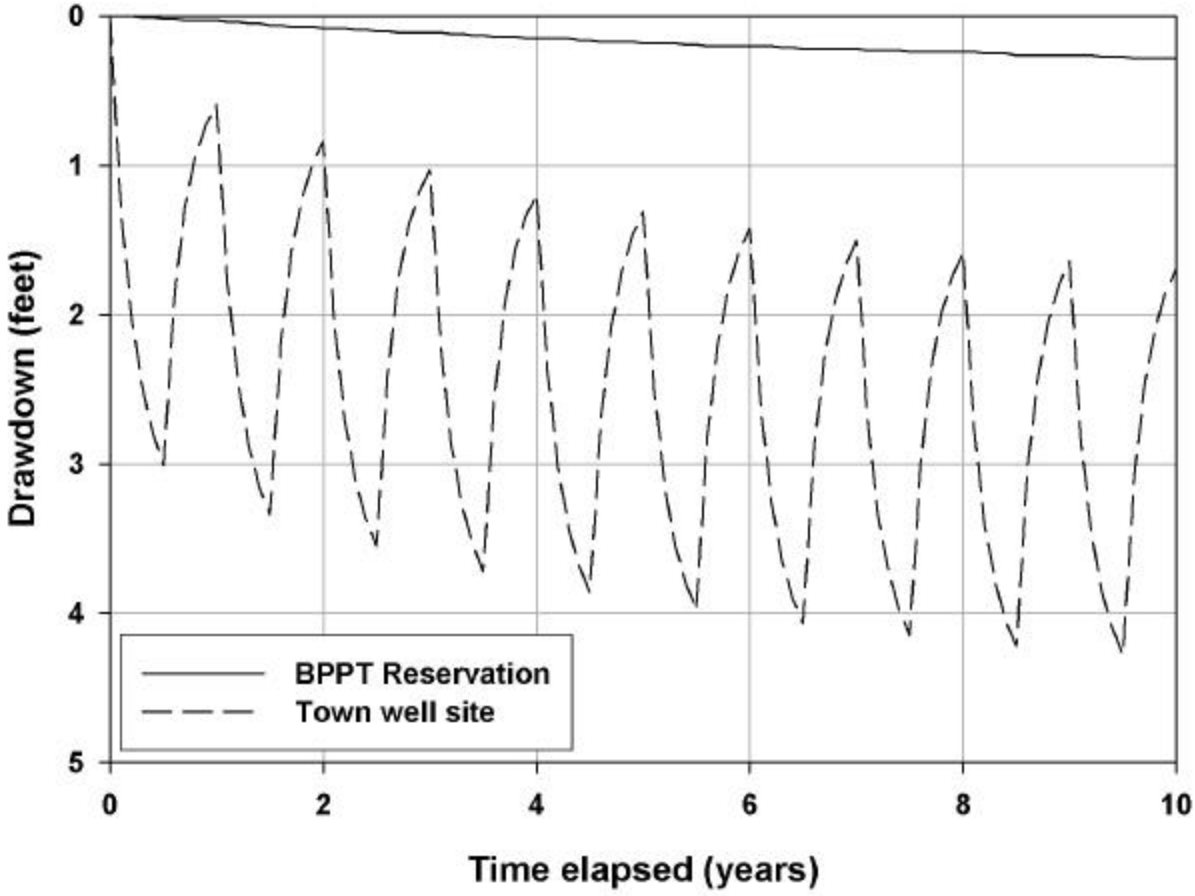

Figure 3. Simulated drawdown resulting from using town supply well to supply project.

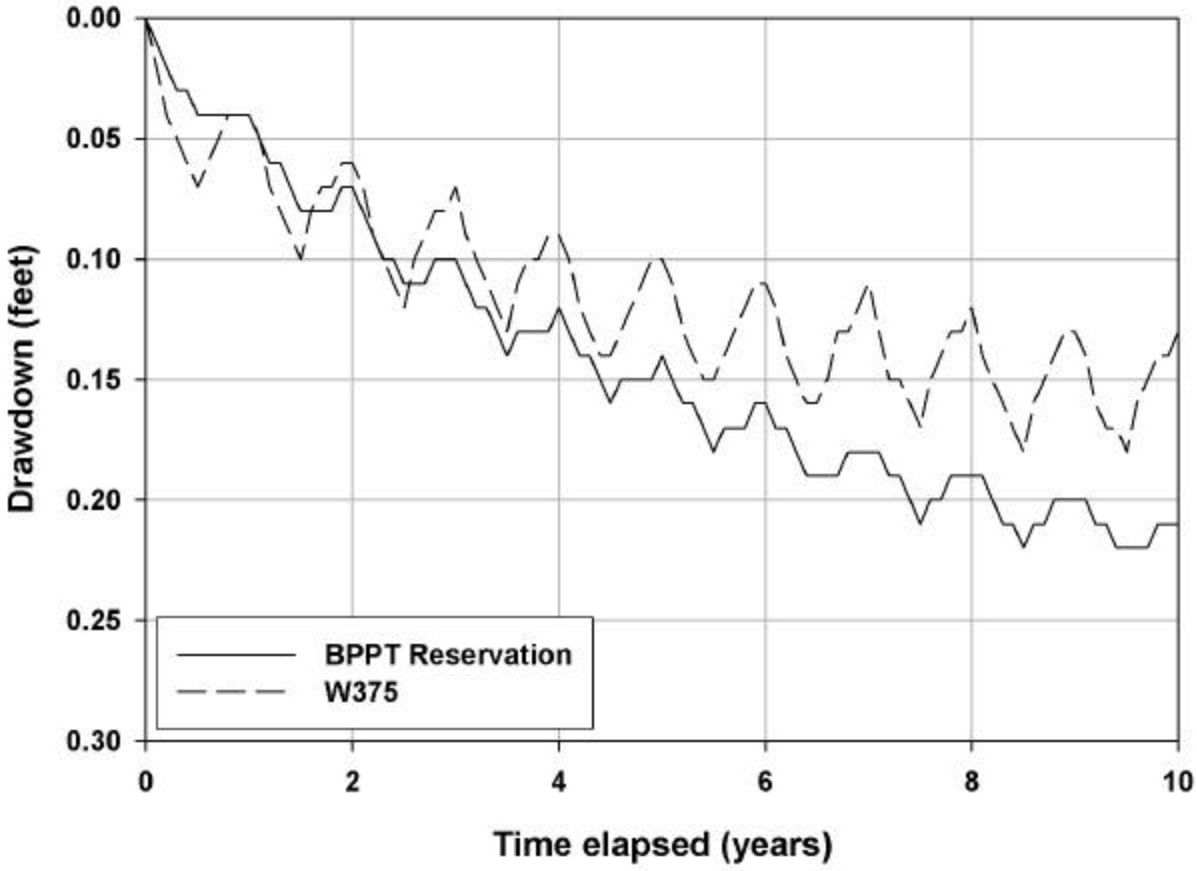

Figure 4. Simulated drawdown resulting from pumping W375 to provide make-up water.