

# **Initial Study / Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**Mono Gate One Diversion Facility Upgrade Project**  
Mono County, California



Los Angeles Department of Water and Power  
Environmental Services  
111 North Hope Street, Room 1044  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**January 2008**

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Appendix A: Air Quality

Appendix B: California Department of Fish and Game (Correspondence Letter)

Appendix C: Archaeological Survey and Historical Resources

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMPs	best management practices
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
cfs	cubic feet per second
CO	carbon monoxide
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GBUAPCD	Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District
HABS/HAER	Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record
IS	Initial Study
kV	kilovolt
LADWP	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MSL	mean sea level
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO <sub>x</sub>	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
Outlet Tunnel	Grant Reservoir Outlet Tunnel
PM <sub>10</sub>	particulate matter 10 microns of less in diameter
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	particulate matter 2.5 microns of less in diameter
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
Return Ditch	Mono Gate One/Rush Return Ditch
RM	Resource Management
ROC	reactive organic compounds
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCE	Southern California Edison
SO <sub>x</sub>	sulfur dioxide
SR	State Route
SRA	Scientific Resources Associated
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resource Control Board
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDAFS	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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The following discussion of potential environmental effects was completed in accordance with Section 15063(d) (3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (2004) to determine if the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

### CEQA INITIAL STUDY FORM

1. **Project title:** Mono Gate One Diversion Facility Upgrade Project
2. **Lead agency name and address:**  
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)  
111 N. Hope Street; Room 1044  
Los Angeles, CA 90012
3. **Contact person and phone number:**  
Sarah Easley Perez, Environmental Specialist, (213) 367-1276
4. **Project location:** Mono County 3rd District (Supervisor Vikki Bauer). See Section 2.2 of this document.
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:**  
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)  
111 N. Hope Street; Room 1044  
Los Angeles, CA 90012
6. **General plan designation:** Resource Management (RM)
7. **Zoning:** No zoning designation is listed for the Project site.
8. **Description of project:** See Section 2.0 of this document.
9. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** See Section 2.5 of this document.
10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** See Section 2.6 of this document.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

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

	Aesthetics
	Agriculture Resources
	Air Quality
	Biological Resources
	Cultural Resources
	Geology/Soils
	Hazards & Hazardous Material
	Hydrology/Water Quality
	Land Use Planning
	Mineral Resources
	Noise
	Population/Housing
	Public Services
	Recreation
	Transportation/Traffic
	Utilities/Service Systems
	Mandatory Findings of Significance



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## **2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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### **2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The existing Mono Gate One diversion facility was built in the late 1930's. Mono Gate One and the Mono Gate One/Rush Return Ditch (Return Ditch) are located approximately 0.6 miles east of Grant Reservoir Dam. Operationally, water from Grant Reservoir enters Mono Gate One from the west from the Grant Reservoir Outlet Tunnel (Outlet Tunnel) originating at the Grant Reservoir shaft house. As originally designed, the water flows through Mono Gate One in a straight line out the east side of the gate and into LADWP's Mono Craters Tunnel for export to Los Angeles. When necessary, LADWP places diversion boards in front of the export tunnel, forcing the water to make a 90 degree turn to the north to exit Mono Gate One into the Return Ditch which would then flow downstream into Lower Rush Creek. Mono Gate One was originally constructed as a means to release excess water from the aqueduct system in times of high flows.

Current State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) operational requirements mandate specific continuous base and peak flows into to the Return Ditch to feed the ecosystem of Lower Rush Creek. The present configuration of Mono Gate One has no monitoring or flow control capabilities and was not designed for precise metering of flows or for full time operation to the Return Ditch, both of which are now requirements for the facility. Additionally, the current structure experiences large vibrations during high flows into the Return Ditch. The proposed facility upgrade project would allow for improved measuring and flow capabilities and would reinforce the structure for more stability during peak flows.

### **2.2 PROJECT LOCATION**

The Mono Gate One Project is located in the southwestern portion of Mono County, California within the Inyo National Forest boundary. The Grant Reservoir is located approximately 0.5 mile to the west, and Mono Lake is located approximately 6.0 miles to the north of the Project site. The primary access to the Project site is from State Highway 395 (Highway 395) via West Portal Road (Figure 1).

### **2.3 PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the Mono Gate One Diversion Facility Upgrade project is:

1. To improve the structural integrity of the Mono Gate One diversion facility so it can continue to be used for peak flow releases in excess of 250 cubic feet per second (cfs) and to allow for improved flow control and measurement to meet the State Water Resource Control Board's (SWRCB) mandated base and peak flow requirements into the Mono Gate One/Rush Return Ditch and into Lower Rush Creek.
2. To allow for better flow control and measurement from the Grant Reservoir Shaft house to Lower Rush Creek and Mono Craters Tunnel.
3. To allow for better communications, flow monitoring, and flow control between the Mono Gate One diversion facility and LADWP's Bishop facilities.

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# Mono Gate One Vicinity Map

FIGURE 2

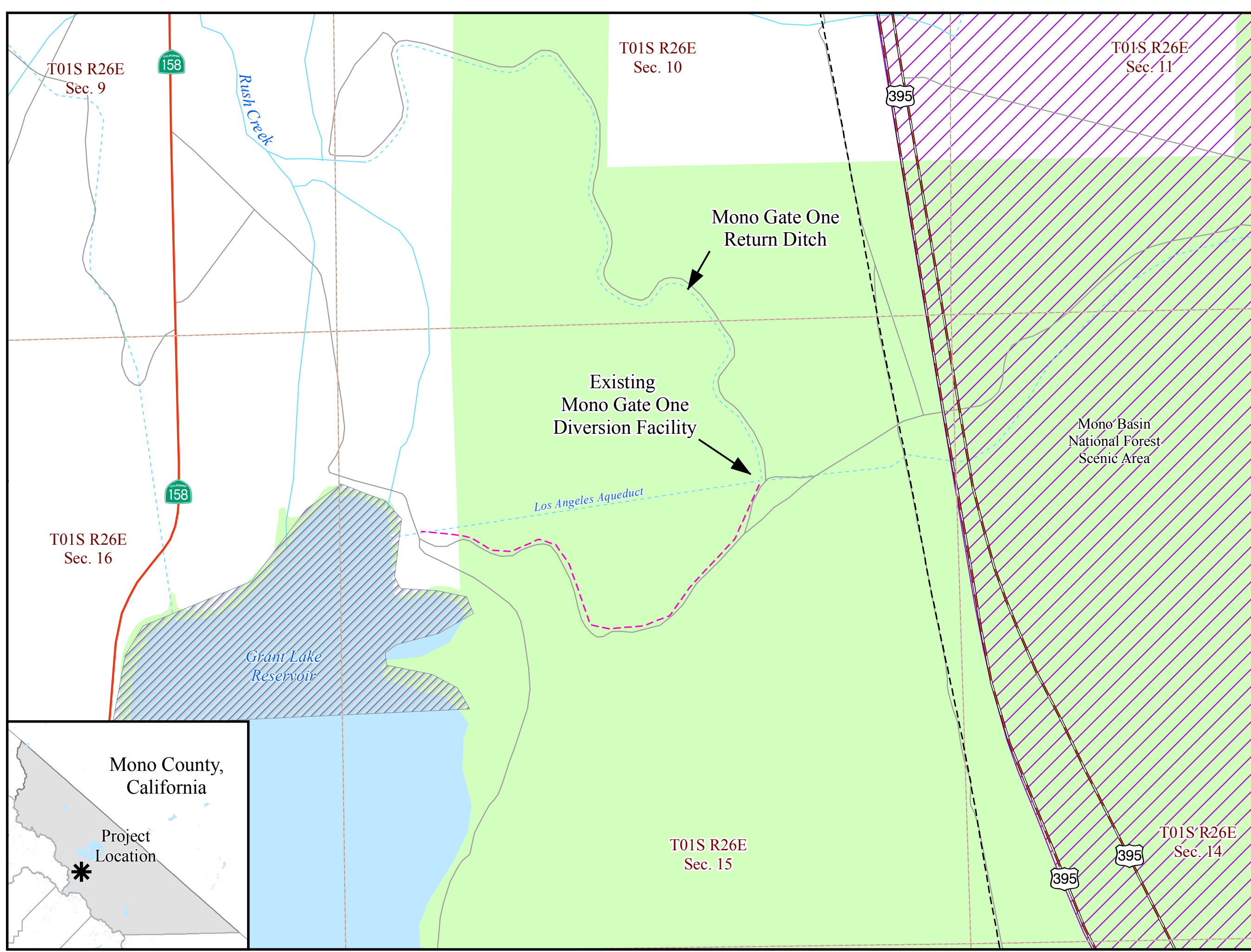
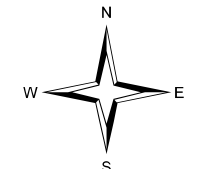
## Legend

- Existing 138kV Transmission Line
- Proposed 4kV Distribution Line
- US Highway
- State Highways
- Local Road
- Section Line
- Stream
- Aqueduct, Ditch, or Canal
- 100 Year Floodplain
- Reservoir
- Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area
- USDA Forest Service Property

0 500 1,000 1,500

Feet

1:9,000



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## 2.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project entails the modification of the existing weir structure at Mono Gate One to meet present day requirements. Improved functionality would be met by installing current technology in monitoring, communication, and control devices.

Mono Gate One is the facility that LADWP uses to split flows between Mono Gate One/Rush Return Ditch (Return Ditch) and Mono Craters Tunnel. The Return Ditch is the primary source of water to sustain the ecosystem of Lower Rush Creek. Mono Craters Tunnel is the only means of exporting water from the Mono Basin for use in the Owens Valley and Los Angeles. During construction, LADWP would halt all exports through Mono Craters Tunnel; however, flows into the Return Ditch would be maintained to sustain Lower Rush Creek. During all construction activities, LADWP staff would be on-site to ensure that proper flows are maintained in the Return Ditch.

The construction site, including staging area, would be confined to less than five acres (Figure 2). A majority of the construction site and staging area would occur in areas already disturbed by past construction activities. The final facility footprint may be slightly larger than the current facility footprint; however, it would not encroach into any areas previously undisturbed. Prior to construction activities, any areas that would be disturbed would be scraped of the top soil to retain the soil nutrients and seed bank for use during revegetation efforts at project completion. The construction site and staging area would be isolated to ensure no construction sediments or debris would enter the Return Ditch.

During the first season of construction, which is tentatively scheduled to occur from April through October 2008, LADWP would tap into the Outlet Tunnel which feeds Mono Gate One approximately 200 feet to the east. An approximately 150-foot bypass pipeline and valve would be installed. The pipeline would extend east to the Return Ditch just north of Mono Gate One. This diversion would be maintained throughout the course of the project to ensure that flows to Lower Rush Creek would not be interrupted and would eventually be maintained as a bypass pipeline to provide flows to the Return Ditch.

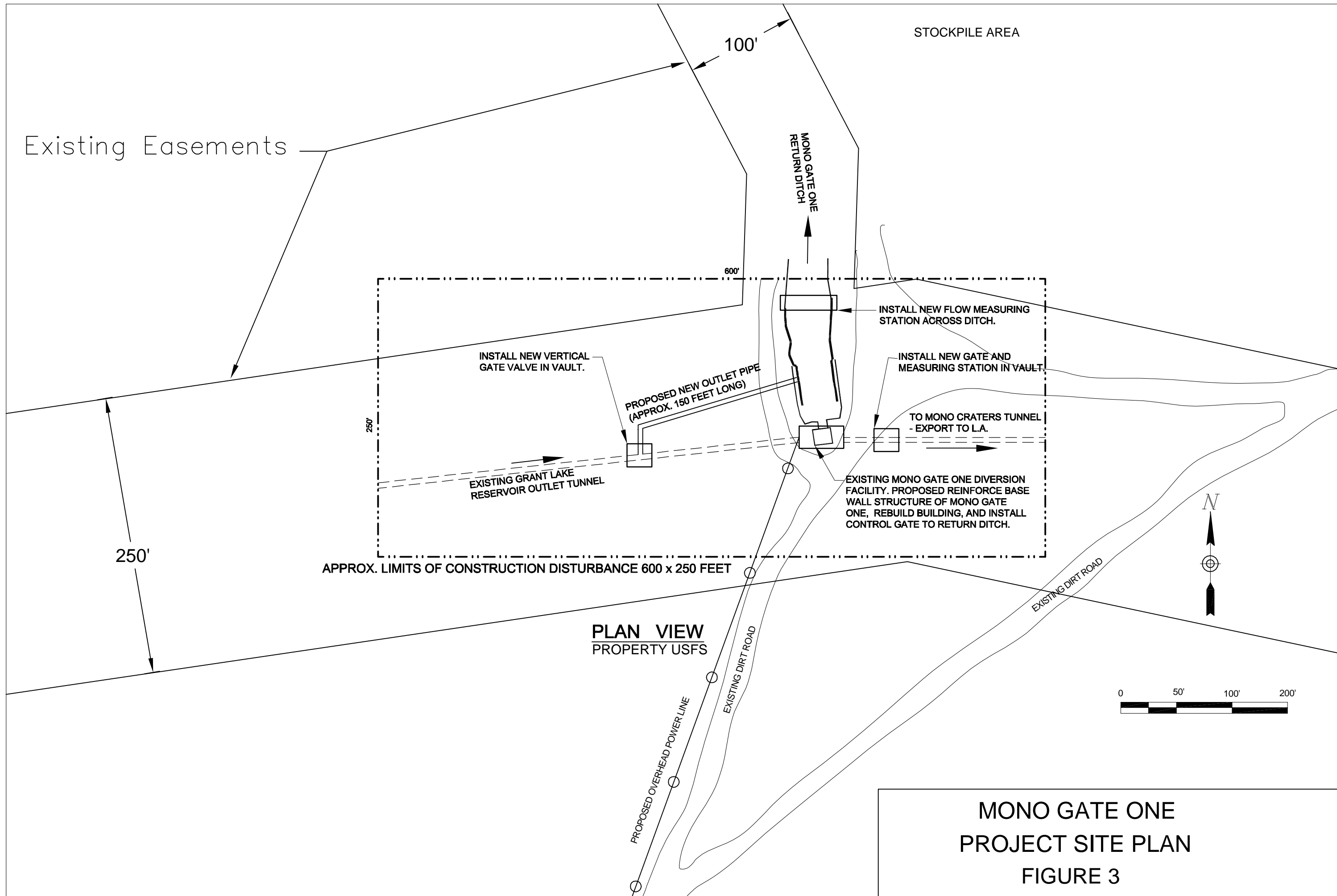
During the second season of construction, which is tentatively scheduled to occur from April through October 2009, the existing corrugated metal building would be removed. The area around the existing Mono Gate One concrete structure would be excavated and the structure would be reinforced with additional concrete walls. All debris from the demolition would be hauled off-site and disposed of properly. New flow control gates would be installed within the reinforced Mono Gate One structure. Equipment would be installed for flow control and monitoring telemetry. A new measuring station would be installed in the Return Ditch downstream of the bypass pipeline.

A new concrete structure would be built over the Mono Gate One reinforced structure. The final facility footprint may be slightly larger than the current facility footprint; however, it would not encroach into any areas previously undisturbed.

A new aboveground 12 kilovolt (kV) electrical distribution facility would be installed from the Grant Reservoir shaft house to Mono Gate One along the existing road right of way extending

southeast from the Project Site. The length of the new overhead power line would be approximately 4,100 feet. Alternatively, if a new distribution line is not constructed, a solar panel array would be installed at the facility to power operations.

During construction activities, there would be less than 50 construction vehicle trips per day, and most days this number would be less than 20. A water truck would be utilized to suppress dust emissions during all construction activities.



Existing Easements

STOCKPILE AREA

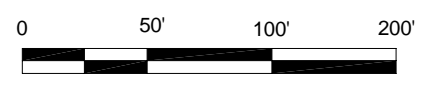
100'

600'

250'

APPROX. LIMITS OF CONSTRUCTION DISTURBANCE 600 x 250 FEET

PLAN VIEW  
PROPERTY USFS



MONO GATE ONE  
PROJECT SITE PLAN  
FIGURE 3

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## **2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES**

The natural topography of the project area is valley lowland intersected with rolling hills surrounded by the Eastern Sierra Mountain Ranges. Elevation at the project site is approximately 7,196 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The project area is located entirely within the Inyo National Forest, under jurisdictional management by the USDA Forest Service. The surrounding land is undeveloped with some disturbed and revegetated areas surrounding the immediate vicinity.

Surrounding land uses are designated as Resource Management (RM) by the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDAFS, 1988).

## **2.6 AGENCIES, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS**

All the required federal, state, and local agency permits and approvals would be obtained prior to the start of construction of the proposed Project. This list may be modified as a result of field investigations and further consultation with agencies.

### ***Local Agencies***

*Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (CEQA Lead Agency)*

- CEQA compliance

*Mono County*

- Construction, building, and grading permits consistent with Mono County Codes

### ***State Agencies***

*California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region*

- Clean Water Act, Section 402 General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

*California Office of Historic Preservation*

- Project review and approval

*California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)*

- Permit for transport of oversize loads

*California Highway Patrol*

- Notification of transport of oversize loads

### ***Federal Agencies***

*U.S. Forest Service (NEPA Lead Agency)*

- NEPA Compliance
- Special Use Permit
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Compliance

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## 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

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### 3.1 AESTHETICS

#### Would the Project:

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Scenic vistas in the project area are viewed from the US Highway 395 (US 395) designated California State Scenic Highway, June Loop Road (SR 158) designated Mono County Scenic Highway/Eligible State Scenic Highway, and Grant Reservoir. The visual corridor along US 395 has been identified in both the Mono County General Plan and Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as an important viewshed for the traveling public (Mono GP, 2007). The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area is located on the east side of US 395 adjacent to the project area. From the scenic area, views of the project would occur only from the intersection of US 395 and West Portal Road by viewers exiting the Scenic Area. The portions of the project potentially visible from these viewpoints would be the 35-40' overhead power line and associated 12 kV conductors (or solar panels), and the new Mono Gate One structure. Construction operations may also somewhat degrade scenic vistas for a short duration.

Scenic vistas from US 395, the primary viewing point (corridor), toward the new facility currently have an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) h-frame 138 kV transmission line in the foreground view. North-bound viewers would view the project for only a brief time, would only see a short section of the new overhead power line, and generally have their views directed to the northeast towards the Mono Lake Basin National Forest Scenic Area. South-bound viewers are directed toward Mt. Gibbs, Mt. Lewis and Mt. Wood to the west, and have the existing high-voltage line in the foreground. The presence of the new line and construction activities could adversely affect the scenic vista from the highway, but because of the presence of the existing high-voltage line and the distance the new structures would be from the highway, impacts are expected to be less than significant.

The scenic vista across the reservoir from the SR 158 would be minimally affected due to distance, contrasts between foreground and background, and viewing duration. An existing SCE h-frame 138 kV high-voltage line, the Grant Reservoir shaft house, and an existing aqueduct gate structure are currently within the viewshed.

Grant Reservoir and the Grant Marina provide fishing, power and sail boating, and other water recreation activities. These developed facilities are at the southeast end of the reservoir over 2.0 miles from the project at Grant Marina. The scenic vista from the reservoir would be minimally affected. Scenic views from the reservoir are

generally directed toward Mt. Gibbs, Mt. Lewis and Mt. Wood to the west. Due to distance and primary viewer orientation, the scenic vista from the reservoir would be minimally affected.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Damage to scenic resources as seen from the US 395 designated State Scenic Highway would not be significant. Scenic resources for this project would potentially include rock outcroppings and the existing National Register eligible gate structure. The proposed distribution line would follow the existing access road, minimizing the need for grading or disturbance to rock outcroppings. No blasting or other disturbance to rock outcropping would be necessary. The project would not significantly impact the current aesthetic value the designated highway.

**c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Visual quality of the area is above average for the region near Grant Reservoir. The site and its environs are a mix of natural landscapes and cultural modifications mainly in the form of roads, overhead utility lines and poles and LADWP water facility structures.

The 4,100-foot overhead power line would be seen from Grant Reservoir, north-bound June Loop Road/SR 158 designated Mono county Scenic Highway/Eligible State Scenic Highway travelers, and along a very short section of the US 395 designated State Scenic Highway from both the north and south bound directions. The overhead power line and structure would be skylined near the middle portion of the line where it would cross a high point along the access road.

The project would incrementally increase developed character of the site, and adverse impacts would be mitigated through the use of wood poles for the power line and structure colors that blend with the native landscape. Some trenching and excavation would occur as a result of the new pipeline and associated facility installation that would cause weak landform contrasts and scarring to vegetation patterns, but these areas would be rehabilitated to the existing condition after project construction.

Short term construction impacts created as a result of the presence of equipment, vehicles, and fugitive dust would be reduced by dust suppression techniques, designated yarding and parking area identification, and by limiting the duration that equipment is on site. Construction impacts would be less than significant due to the short term nature of the activities.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Light and/or glare may potentially occur from four possible sources for this project:

- 1) Solar panels;
- 2) New galvanized steel-sided concrete gate structure; and
- 3) Project lighting during after hours construction operations.

The solar power generating hardware, which would primarily consist of a maximum of two 8'x 8' panels, could be used in place of the proposed 12 kV transmission line as an alternative power source. The panels would be oriented to the south, and placement could potentially cause reflected sunlight glare visible to north-bound US 395 State Scenic Highway viewers. North-bound travelers come down a hill from the south and view the Mono Lake Basin in the distance to the northeast. Also, the panels would be placed slightly higher than the existing structure, may be only very briefly visible to highway travelers, and would be viewed at nearly a perpendicular angle near the access road-highway intersection. Topography and vegetation would typically obscure views of the diversion facility and solar panels.

The galvanized sided structure would be painted earth tone colors to minimize potential glare and to help blend it into the surrounding landscape. As with the existing structure, the new one would be only very briefly visible from US 385 Highway south-bound travelers.

Potential contrasts created by the project as a result of work space area lighting would be reduced by restricting construction operations to daytime hours unless otherwise required for safety or emergency situations. The potential affects of project lighting would be minimized by restricting the hours of construction from between sunrise and sunset, generally between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

### 3.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

#### **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?**

**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 (DOCa, 2006). According to the California Department of Conservation, the California Resources Agency tasked with overseeing Farmland conservation efforts, the area of the proposed project is not mapped and therefore cannot be considered Farmland.

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

**NO IMPACT.** No part of the proposed project alignment is located on or near land zoned for agricultural use or subject to a Williamson Act contract (Mono GP, 2007).

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

**NO IMPACT.** The project site is not designated as Farmland and would not change the existing environment in such a way that would result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use (DOCb, 2007).

### **3.3 AIR QUALITY**

#### **Would the Project:**

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

**NO IMPACT.** The Federal Clean Air Act requires jurisdictions of non-attainment areas to prepare air quality plans that demonstrate strategies for achieving attainment. Air quality plans developed to meet federal requirements are referred to as State Implementation Plans. The California Clean Air Act also requires plans for non-attainment areas with respect to the State standards. Within the project study area, the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) has the responsibility for preparing an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), which addresses the Federal and State Clean Air Act requirements. The AQMP details goals, policies, and programs for improving air quality and establishes thresholds for daily emissions. Environmental review of individual projects within the region must demonstrate that daily construction and operational emission thresholds, as established by the GBUAPCD, would not be exceeded, nor would the number or severity of existing air quality violations be increased.

The proposed project would replace the existing LADWP diversion facility. The upgraded facility would not discharge emissions and would therefore, not conflict with implementation of the AQMP.

**b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The New Source Review requirements of the GBUAPCD provide numerical thresholds for criteria pollutants above which a project would be required to demonstrate that it would not cause or contribute to an air quality violation. Emissions below these thresholds would not be anticipated to result in a violation of an air quality standard.

Project-related construction traffic and operation of diesel equipment would have a temporary effect on air quality in the vicinity of the proposed project. Construction worker vehicles and diesel-powered equipment would emit reactive organic

compounds (ROCs), CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and particulate matter in the form of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>. In addition, fugitive dust in the form PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> would be generated onsite during earth moving operations such as trenching, and would be generated offsite along haul truck travel routes. As shown in Table 5 of the Air Quality Impact Analysis (SRA, 2007), maximum daily emissions of criteria pollutants associated with construction during both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Mono Gate One Diversion Project would be below the numerical thresholds established by GBUAPCD. These emissions would increase local concentrations temporarily, but would not be expected to increase the frequency of violations of air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

As construction is a temporary impact, emissions associated with construction are also temporary and would not be expected to cause a long-term impact to the ambient air quality. Long-term air quality impacts are those associated with the change in permanent usage of the project site. The facility would not be used for any additional uses other than those currently in practice.

- 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)?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The Mono Basin is classified as a nonattainment area for PM<sub>10</sub>. Construction of the project could take place at the same time as other construction projects in the vicinity; however, construction impacts are short-term and tend to be localized. Because emissions of PM<sub>10</sub> are below the significance thresholds during construction, and because project construction would be temporary, it would not be expected to result in a cumulatively significant impact on the ambient air quality (SRA, 2007).

- d) **Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The project site is located in a remote area of Mono County and there are no sensitive receptors for local air pollutant emissions or pollution hot spots. Diesel exhaust particulate matter would be emitted during construction from heavy equipment used in the construction process. Because diesel exhaust particulate matter is considered to be carcinogenic, long-term exposure to diesel exhaust emissions could result in adverse health impacts. However, due to the lack of sensitive receptors in the immediate vicinity of the construction and the short-term nature of construction, the project would not be anticipated to expose sensitive receptors (including, but not limited to, schools, hospitals, resident care facilities, or daycare centers) to substantial pollutant concentrations (SRA, 2007).

- e) **Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.** The project would not include the types of emissions sources or activities that are normally associated with odor impacts.

### 3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** No known state or federally listed threatened or endangered species occur within the boundaries of the project. Two California Native Plant Society list 1B.2 species *Lupinus duranii* (Mono Lake lupine) and *Astragalus monoensis* (Mono Milk-vetch) could occur, but were not present during vegetation surveys.

- b) **Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?**

**NO IMPACT.** This project occurs within the Great Basin Shrub community type and would not have an adverse impact on riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities.

- c) **Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

**NO IMPACT.** This project would occur in upland habitat types and would not have a significant substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands.

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

**NO IMPACT.** This project would 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 native wildlife nursery sites.

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

**NO IMPACT.** This project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

- 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?**



**NO IMPACT.** This project does not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan.

### 3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### Would the Project:

- a) **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.** Previous historical research and evaluation of the Mono Basin Extension of the Los Angeles Aqueduct system resulted in the recommendation that Mono Gate One appears eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a feature of a significant historic property (Herbert, 1996). The recommendation notes that while some modifications to features of the system have occurred over time, these modifications have not altered the overall integrity of the system. This determination was based on the role that this system played in supporting the development of the City of Los Angeles, as well as being an example of a water system designed to provide an urban environment with water from a remote mountain source. Specifically, the Mono Basin Extension is identified as significant under NRHP Criterion A, association with events important to our history. The Mono Basin Extension's association with the Los Angeles Aqueduct, and the growth and economic expansion of southern California in general and Los Angeles in particular, appear to make it eligible under Criterion A. The Mono Basin Extension is also identified as eligible under NRHP Criterion C, as part of an engineering work of state and regional significance. Mono Basin Extension was found to be an outstanding example of an urban trans-basin water supply system tapping a remote mountain source. The recommendation found Mono Gate One to be a significant part of the LADWP's Mono Basin Extension Project and the Los Angeles Aqueduct system.

Mono Gate One retains a substantial degree of integrity to its period of significance, circa 1936-1941 when it was constructed and diversions began. The only major alteration is the addition on the western side of the building; however, it is clad in the same corrugated metal materials as the original structure. Mono Gate One and the Return Ditch have retained a high degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. Mono Gate One and the Return Ditch are in their original location. Their design, workmanship, and materials have not been significantly changed since their construction. Their setting is remarkably similar to when the facilities were originally constructed, primarily because the land on which they are located is owned by the LADWP and thus has not been developed, and because they are also surrounded by National Forest lands and recreation areas. As a result, they retain a strong sense of feeling and association (Herbert 1996:18). The combination of historical significance and integrity to the period of significance

supports the conclusion that Mono Gate One and the Return Ditch appear eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Implementation of the Mono Gate One Diversion Facility Upgrade Project would result in a potentially significant impact to the resource in that it would require the removal and replacement of the original diversion structure. This impact can be mitigated to a less than significant level through the implementation of the following measures to avoid, minimize and compensate for this impact.

**CUL-1** Should it be infeasible to temporarily remove the structure shed, or work around it, mitigation would entail designing a replacement shed that would closely match the historic shed in terms of its overall proportions, materials (metal cladding), and roof shape (side-gabled instead of hipped), in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation: (<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>).

**CUL-2** Prior to construction and the removal of the existing historic diversion structure shed, document the existing historic shed, including the mechanics of the operation gate system, through drawings, photographs and written descriptions. This documentation would be offered to local libraries and historical societies, such as the Mono Lake Research Library in Lee Vining, the Mono County Museum in Bridgeport, and the UC Berkeley Water Resources Center Archives. The documentation would entail using large format camera Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) Level II black-and-white 8-by-10 inch archival quality prints produced by a professional photographer; it should be accompanied by a report prepared by a professional architectural historian. A minimum of ten views shall be documented and two sets of prints shall be sent to the California State Library in Sacramento and to the Mono Basin Clearinghouse, along with one set of prints to either a local museum or library. Measured drawings shall be prepared of the structure under the supervision of a qualified architectural historian. Plans, as-built drawings and other available documents of Mono Gate One would be collected and offered to a local library or historical society.

**CUL-3** Design a small plaque for installation on the new diversion shed structure that includes a photograph or drawing and a written description of the historic diversion shed structure and a brief history of this portion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct system.

**CUL-4** The historic shed would be offered as a donation to local museums and historical societies. Contacts shall be made to local historical advocacy groups that may be interested in acquiring and relocating the historic diversion shed structure.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.** With the exception of Mono Gate One itself, discussed above; no archaeological resources were identified within the proposed project area during

record searches, literature reviews, and on-site field reconnaissance surveys. Consequently, the project would not result in any adverse change to significant archaeological resources (URS, 2007). However, potential to discover archaeological resources exist during grading and trenching operations. To reduce potential impacts associated with the disturbance of archaeological resources, if discovered, to a less than significant level, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented:

**CUL-5** Should any cultural materials be identified during construction activities, all ground disturbances in the vicinity of the find should be halted until the significance of the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and an appropriate course of action be determined.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** No unique paleontological or geological resources have been identified in the proposed project area during record searches, literature reviews, and on-site field reconnaissance surveys (URS, 2007).

**d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.** No human remains have been identified in the proposed project area. Consequently, the project would not disturb any human remains (URS, 2007). However, potential to discover human remains exist during grading and trenching operations. To reduce potential impacts associated with the disturbance of human remains, if discovered, to a less than significant level, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented:

**CUL-6** In the event that human remains are encountered, project management will adhere to the provisions of Sections 7052 and 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped near discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are Native American, Section 7052 states that the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission.

### **3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

#### **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**

**NO IMPACT.** No known active or potentially active faults are known to exist or were observed within the portion of the project site to be occupied by the facility (LADWP, 1987). The site is not located within any currently designated State of California Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as designated by (Hart, 1977).

**ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.** The project site is located within the influence of several fault systems that are considered to be active or potentially active. Because the project is located in Seismic Zone 4, it is anticipated that the Project could be affected by strong seismic ground shaking. A peak ground acceleration of 0.43 to 0.79g has a 10 percent chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period (USGS, 2002). Design-level geotechnical investigations and appropriate engineering and construction measures would reduce potential impacts of seismic ground shaking to a less than significant level.

**iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Seismic-related ground failures such as liquefaction, lurching, lateral spreading, and differential settlement can result from strong ground shaking. Liquefaction-related phenomena occur when seismic shaking of loose, cohesionless, saturated sand deposits temporarily lose strength and behave as a liquid. Liquefaction-related phenomena generally occur in areas of shallow groundwater (depths of 50 feet or less). Lateral spreading is the horizontal component of soil movement toward an unsupported face or slope that results from liquefaction of underlying layers. Surface fissures on gently sloping ground are a common feature of lateral spreading and reflect the horizontal movement ranging from a few inches to several feet. Differential or seismic settlements are generally attributed to seismically induced densification of loose granular materials as well as due to loss of material through liquefaction induced lateral spreading. Settlements associated with densification of unconsolidated soils, in the absence of water, are generally nominal.

Design-level geotechnical investigations and appropriate engineering and construction measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts of seismic-related ground failure to a less than significant level.

**iv) Landslides?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** While most of the transmission line route and diversion facility is located on gently inclined ground, there are sloped areas underlain by older alluvial unconsolidated soils that may be susceptible to landslides and would become even more susceptible during strong seismic ground shaking. Steep terrain areas are underlain by granitic bedrock that is not prone to landslides. Design-level geotechnical investigations and appropriate engineering and construction measures would reduce potential impacts of landslides to a less than significant level.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Construction of the proposed project would require minimal vegetation clearing and grading activities, which would result in minimal soil erosion. The new outlet pipe would be operated underground and would have no impact on erosion and the new diversion facility would be constructed in place of the old facility and would have no additional impact on erosion.

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Most of the project area is located on relatively level ground and is not susceptible to landslides. Potentially unstable slopes or weak and expansive soils are not likely at the Project site. Design-level geotechnical investigations, avoidance of potentially sensitive slopes and/or appropriate engineering and construction measures would reduce potential impacts of geologic hazards to a less than significant level.

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** As noted in 6(c) above, it is not likely that expansive soils would be encountered at the Project site. Design-level geotechnical investigations and appropriate engineering and construction measures would evaluate soil properties and reduce potential impacts of geologic hazards to a less than significant level.

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

**NO IMPACT.** The proposed project would not involve septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Construction and operation of the proposed project would not affect any existing, or hinder future, septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, or the soils that would adequately support those systems.

### 3.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

#### Would the Project:

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Project operation would not involve the routine transport, use or disposal of significant amounts of hazardous materials. Maintenance of the diversion facility would require the periodic transport of small amounts hazardous materials such as petroleum products for vehicles or small gas operated machines.

Project measures to avoid and/or minimize impacts from hazards and hazardous

materials would be included as part of the project design or would be incorporated per regulation and LADWP standard construction, operation, and maintenance procedures. Hazardous materials would be shipped and disposed in accordance with Department of Transportation and state and federal EPA regulations. These measures are in addition to the plans that LADWP would implement as part of the project, including:

- Hazardous Materials and Business Emergency Plan
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
- Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan

LADWP's proposed project measures are consistent with those employed for diversion facilities, and would be adequate to ensure a minimal risk of fire, accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances.

**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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.** As described above in Section 3.7(a), the proposed project would not involve the use of substantial quantities of hazardous materials that would pose a risk to the public. Before commencing any excavation, the construction contractor would be required to obtain an "Underground Service Alert Identification Number." To minimize potential damage to any existing utilities, the contractor would not be allowed to excavate until all utility owners are notified, and all substructures are clearly identified. Storage or use of hazardous materials in or near wet or dry streams would be consistent with the Fish and Game Code and other State laws. Furthermore, LADWP's contractor would be required to have available adequate spill containment and cleanup resources on site at all times and be prepared to contain, control, clean up, and dispose of any potential fuel spill quickly and completely. During construction, project personnel would follow all applicable rules and regulations governing the storage, transportation, use, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.

In addition to the above best management practices (BMPs), Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-4 would be implemented to reduce the potential and extent of an upset or accident condition involving the release of hazardous materials during construction to less than significant levels.

**HAZ-1** LADWP or its construction contractor shall store fuel, oil, and other hazardous materials only in containers with secondary containment at designated sites. Quantities of all hazardous materials stored on-site shall be minimized. Each hazardous material container shall be clearly labeled with its identity, handling and safety instructions, and emergency contact. Storage and transfer of such materials shall not be allowed within 100 feet of streams or sites known to contain sensitive biological resources except with the permission of LADWP construction manager.

**HAZ-2** LADWP or its construction contractor shall maintain construction equipment to minimize fuel, oil and other potentially hazardous material spills. Stationary power equipment, such as engines, pumps, generators, welders, and air compressors, shall be positioned over drip pans.

**HAZ-3** In case of a spill or accident involving hazardous materials in excess of allowable limits according to Mono County Fire Department, LADWP or its construction contractor shall immediately notify the Mono County Fire Department. All other federal, state, and local notification requirements shall be followed for any release that exceeds the reportable quantity or threatens to have a significant impact. Any soils contaminated by spills or cleaning wastes shall be contained and shall be removed to an approved disposal site.

**HAZ-4** LADWP or its construction contractor shall protect tanks temporarily placed for refueling from potential traffic hazards by vehicle barriers.

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

**NO IMPACT.** Currently no schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site. The closest school is Lee Vining Elementary School located approximately 6.5 miles north of the project site. Therefore, no impacts to schools due to hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous materials would occur (Mono GIS, 2007).

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** Government Code Section 65962.5 refers to a list of facilities that may be subject to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective action program. No listed RCRA sites occur on the subject property, and there are no known hazardous materials on the project site.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The proposed project is not located within an airport land use plan nor is it located within two miles of a known public airport. The closest public airport is Lee Vining Airport located approximately 6.5 miles north; therefore there would be no impact (Google, 2007).

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not pass within two miles of a known private airstrip; therefore there would be no impact.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The proposed project would not impair or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or a local, state, or federal agency's emergency evacuation plan, except for possible short-term periods during construction of the proposed project, when roadway access along West Portal Road may be limited in some areas. Emergency access during construction is discussed further under Transportation and Traffic [Section 3.15(e)]. Once operational, the proposed project would be underground and in replace of current facilities or in open space/recreation areas, and thus would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation plans (Mono GP, 2007).

**h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The project has the potential to increase the risk of wildland fire from construction activities such as sparks emitted during welding and operation of internal combustion engines. During construction, the risk of human-caused accidental wildland fires would be increased. However, proper safety precautions would be implemented to protect both natural resources and investment in equipment. Typical fire safety standards would be implemented, including (1) all construction and maintenance vehicles at the site would carry a shovel and fire extinguisher, (2) a 10-foot fuel break would be constructed around the diversion facility, (3) mats, shields, and wind breaks would be used during welding in open areas, (4) cigarette smoking would be prohibited within the project site, and (5) Occupational Safety and Health Administration, County, and LADWP fire prevention requirements would be enforced.

Construction activities within such fire hazard areas would not pose a substantial risk relative to wildland fires as long as emergency vehicle access is maintained, since construction activities would be temporary and all pipeline welding activities would occur within construction trenches or jacking pits (i.e., away from flammable vegetation). Operation of the proposed project would not expose any people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, since the facility would only convey potable water.

### **3.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

#### **Would the Project:**

**a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Construction of the Mono Gate One Diversion Facility and new outlet pipe would require water, as necessary, to control fugitive dust. Fugitive dust emission at the construction sites would be controlled by water trucks equipped with spray nozzles. Construction of the project also has the



potential to cause soil erosion, which could result in impacts to downstream water quality. Potential runoff from equipment wash-off areas could also affect water quality. Implementation of the required SWPPP would assure all water quality standards and waste discharge requirements are satisfied.

- 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)?**

**NO IMPACT.** Groundwater supplies and recharge would not be impacted by construction or operation of the project, therefore no impact would occur.

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The course of streams and rivers would not be altered as a result of the project. Existing drainage patterns would not be substantially altered. Therefore, no substantial erosion or siltation is expected 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Alteration of streams, rivers or a substantial effect on drainage patterns would not occur during construction. Some vegetation removal and soil disturbance would occur during construction resulting in the potential for increased storm water runoff. However, implementation of the SWPPP would minimize the potential for surface water runoff and reduce the potential for on- or off-site flooding to a less than significant level.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** Construction of the project has the potential to increase surface runoff. However, there are no existing or planned stormwater drainage systems in the project vicinity. Therefore, the project would not contribute to exceeding the capacity of existing or planned public stormwater drainage systems.

- f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Potential short-term erosion could occur during site excavation and construction activities, including backfilling, which could adversely affect surface water quality from runoff water. However, due to the linear

nature of the proposed project and the limited area of ground disturbance, this effect is expected to be minimal.

Construction equipment and trash containers may potentially leak contaminants, increasing the possibility of washing contaminated runoff into nearby water bodies. Usually, however, the amount of contaminants that would leak from construction equipment and trash containers would be relatively small. By comparison, contamination from spills at staging and refueling sites would have a higher risk, as leaked or spilled pollutants could then wash into a waterbody during a storm event and degrade the surface water quality causing potentially significant impacts. However, under the requirements of the NPDES, a SWPPP would be submitted to the Lahonton RWQCB and/or State Water Regional Control Board. Compliance with the SWPPP would ensure that the potential for contamination during construction would be less than significant.

**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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The construction and operation of the proposed project would not involve the placement of housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area.

**h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?**

**NO IMPACT.** The construction and operation of the proposed project would not involve the placement of housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area (see Figure 1). The entire Project footprint is located outside of the 100-year flood hazard area (DOCb, 2007). The proposed outlet pipeline would be placed underground from the Grant Reservoir Outlet Tunnel to the Rush Creek Return Ditch.

**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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The proposed project would not cause, or increase the likelihood of, failure of a levee or dam that could result in flooding. As such, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding.

**j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project area is not located near a body of water that would cause a seiche or tsunami. Although there are hills in the project area, mudflows are unlikely to occur at a level to cause destruction or inundation of the diversion facility due to the distance of the hills from the project.

### 3.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

#### Would the Project:

##### a) Physically divide an established community?

**NO IMPACT.** The Project does not involve the construction of walls, structures or other barriers that would physically divide an established community. Additionally, the project is not located within or near 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?

**NO IMPACT.** The proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (Mono GP, 2007). The current land use designation of the project site and surrounding land uses is Resource Management (RM). The RM designation is intended to recognize and maintain a wide variety of values in the lands outside existing communities. The RM designation provides for low-intensity rural uses in a manner that recognizes and maintains the resource values of the parcel. The Project does not propose a change in land use designation.

The proposed project is also consistent with the Land Use Element objectives of the Mono County General Plan and specifically the Mono Basin region. Additionally the proposed distribution lines are consistent with Chapter 11, Section 11.010 of the Mono County General Plan regarding Placement of Utility Lines regarding placement of overhead lines (Mono Code, 2006). Placement of the overhead lines would: 1) not significantly disrupt the visual character of the area; 2) is environmentally preferable to underground placement; 3) does not create an unreasonable financial hardship; and 4) does not serve an agricultural operation.

##### c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

**NO IMPACT.** The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans because no such plans cover the proposed project or immediate surrounding area (Mono GP, 2007). For more information on biological resources, please refer to Section 4.4.

### 3.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

#### 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?

**NO IMPACT.** There are no known statewide and regionally valuable mineral resources at the project site (Mono GP, 2007).

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

**NO IMPACT.** There are no locally important mineral resource recovery sites at the project site. No mineral resource zones are located within the project site as indicated by the Mono County General Plan.

### 3.11 NOISE

#### Would the Project:

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The area surrounding the project property is generally undeveloped, with no noise-sensitive uses, as defined in Chapter 10.16 of the Zoning Code and in the Noise Element of the Mono County General Plan, within several miles. The project would not expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance.

- b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Project operation would not produce excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise. However, temporary and minor construction-related ground vibrations and noise may occur, but would be less than significant, due to the duration and intensity of activities for construction, and the proximity of sensitive receptors, such as residences, in relation to the project site.

- c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

**NO IMPACT.** Project operation would not generate a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels above existing conditions.

- d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Construction of the project would cause a temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. Construction noise would include heavy construction equipment during site grading. However, the project occurs in an area with no permanent occupants within several miles. While construction noise may be audible in areas surrounding the project site,

the distance from source to receptor is over 1.0 mile and would conform to County zoning requirements.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The Project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

### 3.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

**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)?**

**NO IMPACT.** The Project would not induce population growth. The Project is designed to increase the reliability of discharge into the Mono Gate One Return Ditch to Rush Creek. There would not be a change in total water discharge due to the proposed Project.

- b) **Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

**NO IMPACT.** The Project would not displace any existing housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing.

- c) **Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

**NO IMPACT.** The Project would not displace any persons nor require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

### 3.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

**Would the Project:**

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Construction of the project includes welding which may pose an increased fire hazard. Proper fire-safety standards would be followed relative to construction and operations. For example, such activities would take place in areas cleared of vegetation, and adequate fire fighting equipment would be available on-site. In addition, the Mono County Fire Department would be consulted prior to conducting these activities. Due to the short duration of the potential increase in fire hazard, new fire protection facilities would not be constructed. Operation of the project does not emit sparks or otherwise pose an increased fire hazard.

**ii) Police protection?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not permanently increase the local population and would not require the construction of new police protection facilities. While the project area is technically under the jurisdiction of the Mono County Sheriff's Department, the project would not necessitate the increase in patrol by the Sheriff's Department. Project lands would remain private, with controlled access. Private security forces would be used to secure on-site facilities as necessary.

**iii) Schools?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not permanently increase the local population and would not require the construction of new schools.

**iv) Parks?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not permanently increase the local population and would not require the construction of new parks.

**v) Other public facilities?**

**NO IMPACT.** Upon completion of project construction, the project would be owned and operated by LADWP, a public utility. In this regard, the project facilities would become public facilities and part of the LADWP water generation infrastructure. The project would not permanently increase the local population and would not require the construction of other new public facilities.

### **3.14 RECREATION**

**Would the Project:**

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project is not located near or would create a demand for parks or recreational uses. Therefore, the project would not increase the use of existing parks or cause a shift in park usage patterns in existing parks.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not include recreation facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

### 3.15 TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC

#### Would the Project:

- a) **Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Construction traffic for the project would not create a substantial impact on traffic volumes. Delivery of materials to the project site is estimated to require approximately 50 construction trips or fewer per day over a 6-month period. This increase in traffic would not be significant in relation to the capacity or existing traffic flows on the principal access route (Highway 395).

- b) **Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The amount of truck traffic delivering materials to the project site is not significant in relation to traffic levels of service.

- 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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not result in a change of air traffic patterns.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The project would not increase hazards due to any transportation features. Incompatible uses associated with the project, such as use by construction equipment and transport of materials and equipment would be minor and impacts associated with incompatible uses would be less than significant (Mono GP, 2007).

- e) **Result in inadequate emergency access?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Refer to 4.7g. The project would not block existing emergency access routes. The existing access roads of the project would continue to facilitate emergency access to and from the site.

**f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not affect off-site parking capacity. Project-related parking requirements would be accommodated on-site.

**g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not conflict with existing use of alternative transportation.

### **3.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

**Would the Project:**

**a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not be connected to a wastewater treatment facility

**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?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not include construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, and would therefore have no impact associated with environmental effects of expanding such facilities.

**c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not require or result in the construction of additional storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, and would have no impact associated with environmental effects of expanding such facilities.

**d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would require minimal water supplies but would not impact existing supplies and entitlements. Construction crews would bring in potable water for drinking purposes and non-potable water for dust control.



- 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 projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?**

**NO IMPACT.** The project would not be connected to a wastewater treatment plant

- f) **Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Project construction would generate minor amounts of waste, and project operation would generate only negligible amounts of waste. Waste would be disposed of in a facility with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects disposal needs

- g) **Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?**

**NO IMPACT.** Refer to 4.16f. The project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste and disposal of other wastes such as lubricating oils and hydraulic fluids (Mono GP, 2007).

### 3.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 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?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED.** Based on the discussions in the sections above, the project would have no impact on biological resources and a less than significant impact with mitigation on cultural resources. The project would involve the replacement of Mono Gate One which is potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP. However, the implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-6 would reduce any potential impacts to both archaeological and historical resources to a less than significant level.

- b) **Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?**

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** The project would not have cumulatively considerable impacts as the project is a replacement of existing utility features with new facilities of the same size and general appearance. The construction of the new power line would not be cumulatively considerable as the line is a short distance and would be constructed adjacent an existing access road to the Mono Gate One facility.

As indicated by the sections above, the project would have no impact or a less than significant impact for aesthetics, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems. The potential impacts of the project on these environmental factors would be minimal and in conjunction to other local projects would not be cumulatively considerable. The project would have less than significant impacts to cultural resources, and hazards and hazardous materials. Because the project would implement mitigation measures during construction for reducing potential impacts to these environmental factors, the project in conjunction with other local projects would not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts.

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

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.** Based on the discussions in the sections above, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse effect on human beings

either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, potential impacts to cultural resources and hazardous and hazardous materials have been reduced through the implementation of mitigation measures and would therefore not cause a substantial adverse effect on human beings.

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## 4.0 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

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### CULTURAL RESOURCES

**CUL-1** Should it be infeasible to temporarily remove the structure shed, or work around it, mitigation would entail designing a replacement shed that would closely match the historic shed in terms of its overall proportions, materials (metal cladding), and roof shape (side-gabled instead of hipped), in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation: (<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>).

**CUL-2** Prior to construction and the removal of the existing historic diversion structure shed, document the existing historic shed, including the mechanics of the operation gate system, through drawings, photographs and written descriptions. This documentation would be offered to local libraries and historical societies, such as the Mono Lake Research Library in Lee Vining, the Mono County Museum in Bridgeport, and the UC Berkeley Water Resources Center Archives. The documentation would entail using large format camera Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) Level II black-and-white 8-by-10 inch archival quality prints produced by a professional photographer; it should be accompanied by a report prepared by a professional architectural historian. A minimum of ten views shall be documented and two sets of prints shall be sent to the California State Library in Sacramento and to the Mono Basin Clearinghouse, along with one set of prints to either a local museum or library. Measured drawings shall be prepared of the structure under the supervision of a qualified architectural historian. Plans, as-built drawings and other available documents of Mono Gate One would be collected and offered to a local library or historical society.

**CUL-3** Design a small plaque for installation on the new diversion shed structure that includes a photograph or drawing and a written description of the historic diversion shed structure and a brief history of this portion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct system.

**CUL-4** The historic shed would be offered as a donation to local museums and historical societies. Contacts shall be made to local historical advocacy groups that may be interested in acquiring and relocating the historic diversion shed structure.

**CUL-5** Should any cultural materials be identified during construction activities, all ground disturbances in the vicinity of the find should be halted until the significance of the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and an appropriate course of action be determined.

**CUL-6** In the event that human remains are encountered, project management will adhere to the provisions of Sections 7052 and 7050.5 of the California Health and

Safety Code. Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped near discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are Native American, Section 7052 states that the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission.

## **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

**HAZ-1** LADWP or its construction contractor shall store fuel, oil, and other hazardous materials only in containers with secondary containment at designated sites. Quantities of all hazardous materials stored on-site shall be minimized. Each hazardous material container shall be clearly labeled with its identity, handling and safety instructions, and emergency contact. Storage and transfer of such materials shall not be allowed within 100 feet of streams or sites known to contain sensitive biological resources except with the permission of LADWP construction manager.

**HAZ-2** LADWP or its construction contractor shall maintain construction equipment to minimize fuel, oil and other potentially hazardous material spills. Stationary power equipment, such as engines, pumps, generators, welders, and air compressors, shall be positioned over drip pans.

**HAZ-3** In case of a spill or accident involving hazardous materials in excess of allowable limits according to Mono County Fire Department, LADWP or its construction contractor shall immediately notify the Mono County Fire Department. All other federal, state, and local notification requirements shall be followed for any release that exceeds the reportable quantity or threatens to have a significant impact. Any soils contaminated by spills or cleaning wastes shall be contained and shall be removed to an approved disposal site.

**HAZ-4** LADWP or its construction contractor shall protect tanks temporarily placed for refueling from potential traffic hazards by vehicle barriers.

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