

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**

November 2011

CEQA Initial Study and Negative Declaration

Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project

November 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*

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: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power 111 N. Hope Street, Room 1044 Los Angeles, CA 90012	COUNCIL DISTRICT N/A
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PROJECT TITLE: Big Pine Northeast Regreening (November 2011 Initial Study)	LOG REFERENCE N/A
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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

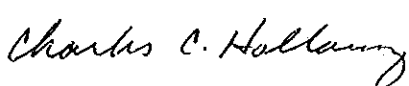
SIGNATURE (Official)  Charles C. Holloway, Manager of Environmental Assessment and Planning	DATE November 10, 2011
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Appendix B	Effects of Groundwater Pumping to Supply the Northeast Big Pine Regreening Mitigation Project Memo from the County of Inyo Water Department, August 30, 2011 Letter from County Inyo Water Department and Robert F. Harrington Curriculum Vitae
Appendix C	Operational Tests of Wells 375W, 380W, 381W, and 382W: Results From Previous Tests and Recommendations for Future Tests and Management
Appendix D	Vegetation Survey
Appendix E	Summary of and Responses to Public Comment Letters on the August 2011 Big Pine Regreening Initial Study

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 Initial Study (IS) has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15000 et seq. The IS serves to identify the site-specific impacts, evaluate their potential significance, and determine the appropriate document needed to comply with CEQA. For this project, LADWP has determined, based on the information reviewed and contained herein, that the proposed Big Pine Northeast Regreening project would not have a significant environmental impact. Based on this IS, a Negative Declaration (ND) is the appropriate CEQA document. Staff recommends that the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners adopt this IS/ND for the proposed project.

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. Type E classification is comprised of areas where water is provided to City-owned lands for alfalfa production, pasture, recreation uses, wildlife habitats, livestock, and enhancement/mitigation projects (Water Agreement). This will require an amendment to the Big Pine Quadrangle Vegetation Management Map that is incorporated into the Water Agreement.

Section 1 – Project and Agency Information

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.

Previous CEQA Document

An Initial Study for this project was originally distributed to agencies, organizations and interested parties for public review from August 3 to September 1, 2011 (August 2011 Initial Study). A Notice of Completion and copies of the document were sent to the State Clearinghouse and the Initial Study was posted on the LADWP website. Notice of availability of document was published in the Inyo Register and with the Inyo County Clerk. Copies of the Initial Study were available at LADWP offices in Bishop and Los Angeles, and also at the Bishop Branch Library.

Section 1 – Project and Agency Information

Public and agency comments received on the August 2011 document are included Appendix E. In response to the comments received, LADWP has revised the Initial Study and is distributing a new document for public review (November 2011 Initial Study). Appendix E also includes a table summarizing the comments received and LADWP responses to comments.

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 Conditions**



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 selected by the lessee that has been commercially modified for increased productivity and palatability which will include clovers, legumes, and perennial grasses and 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

Section 1 – Project and Agency Information

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 an existing well, Well W375 located approximately 3 miles southeast of the project pasture area (see Figures 2 and 3) to make-up for the water supplied to the project.

Additional project components include minor site cleanup, preparation of soil for seeding, fencing of the area and installation of a sprinkler system. The designated lessee (RLI-483, Mendiburu) 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 4):

- 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.

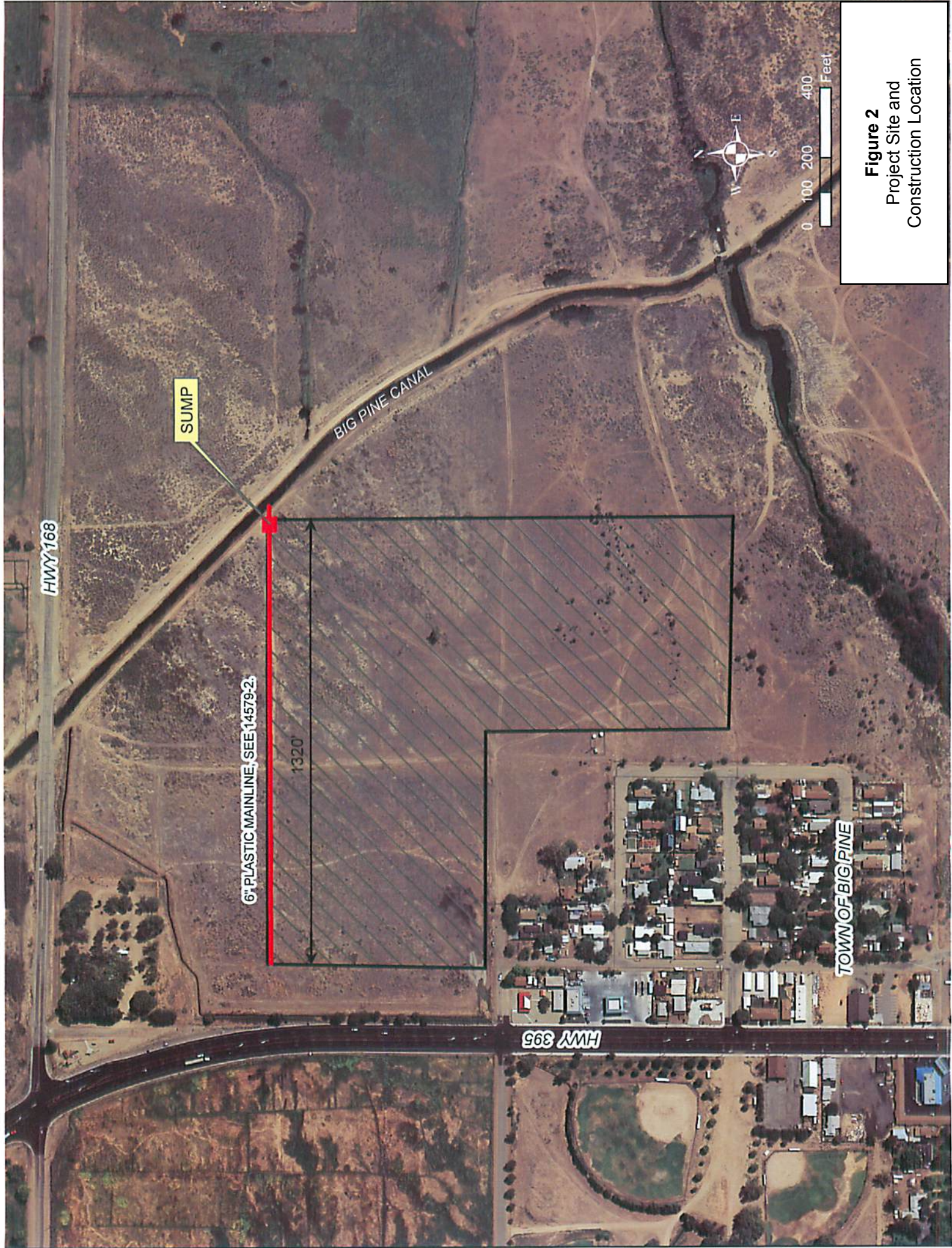


Figure 2
Project Site and
Construction Location

HWY 168

BIG PINE CANAL

SUMP

6" PLASTIC MAINLINE, SEE 14579-2,

1320'

HWY 395

TOWN OF BIG PINE



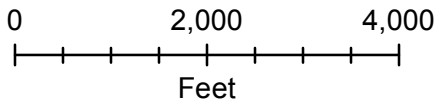
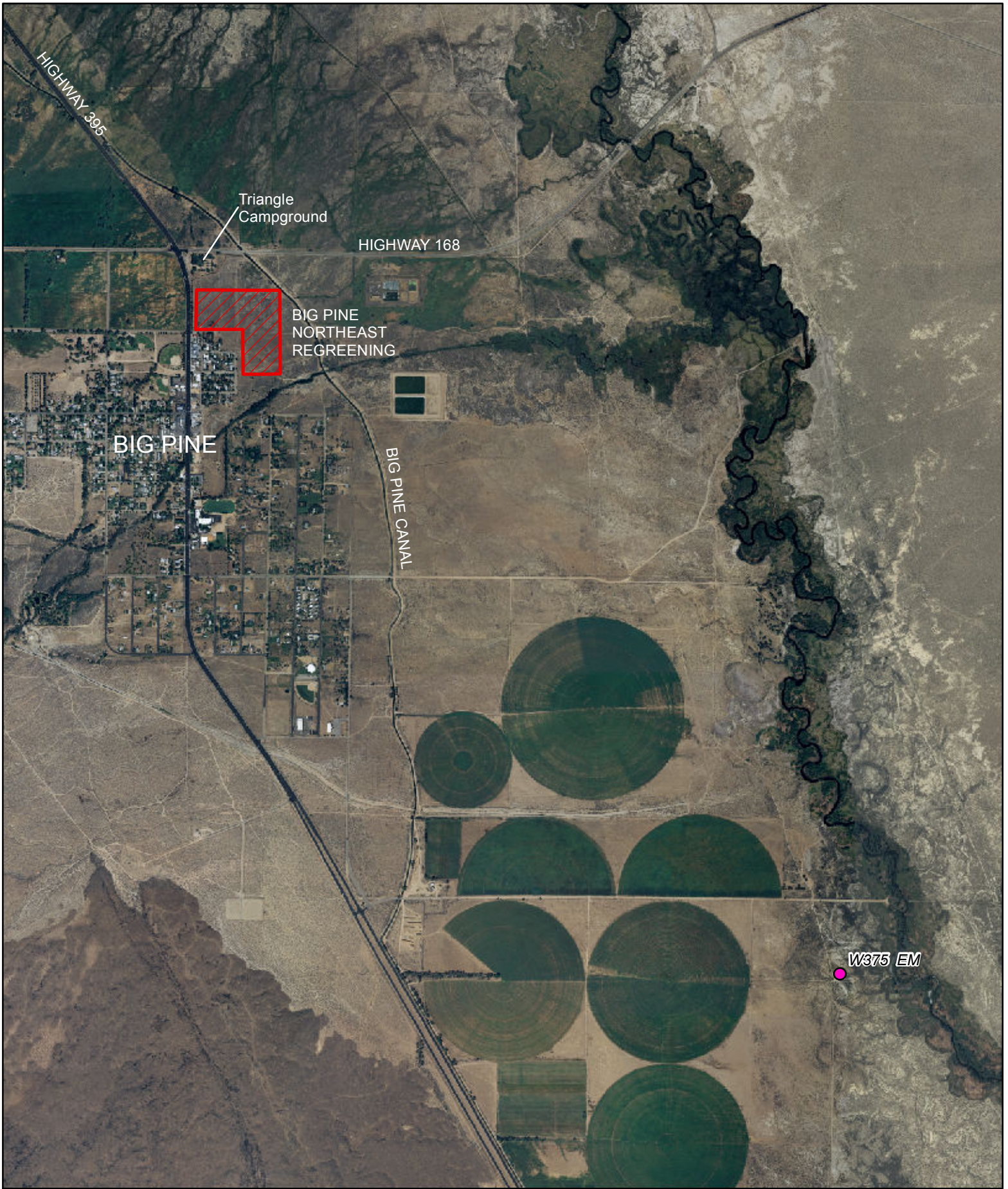
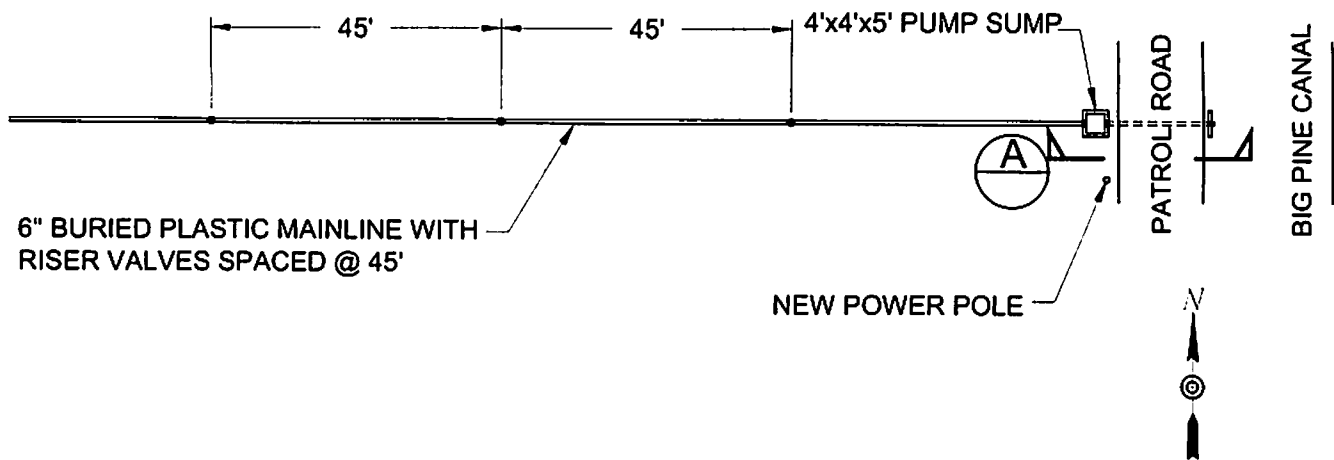
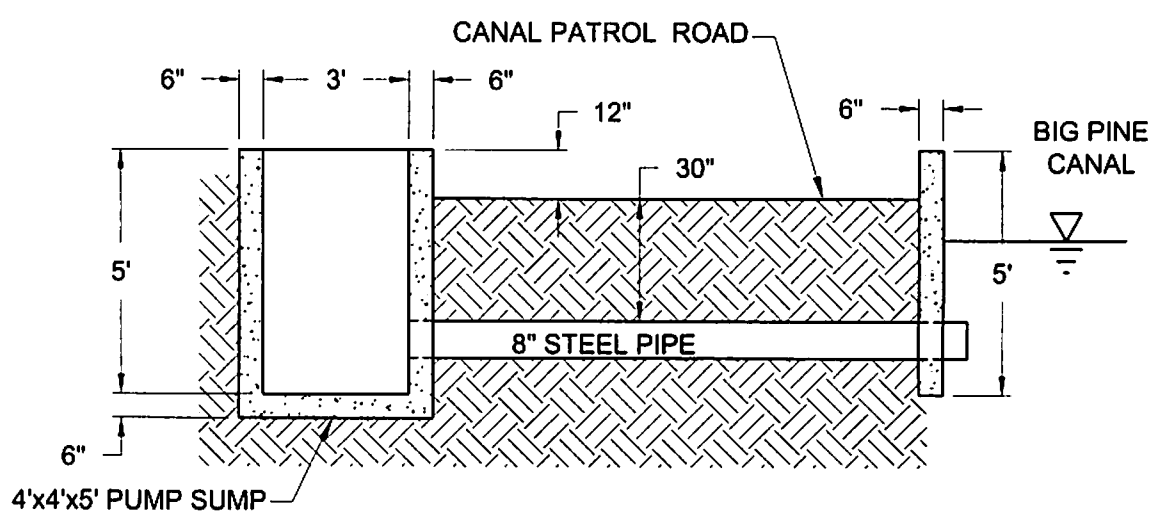


Figure 3
Project Site and Existing
Well W375 Location



PLAN



SECTION A

SCALE: NONE

A14,579-2

BIG PINE NORTHEAST REGREENING - Figure 4

REFERENCES		DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER WATER SYSTEM		CITY OF LOS ANGELES	
		NAME	DATE	APPROVED	
		DESIGNED	W. HOPPER	04/11	
		DRAWN	T. ZHAO	04/11	
WORK ORDER NO. #ZMD02		CHECKED			
				MJD	ASHEET.DWG 10/01

Section 1 – Project and Agency Information

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

Consistency with the Long Term Water Agreement

The proposed project has been designed in accordance with the Water Agreement. Currently (November 2011), Well W375 is designated as in “off-status” per the terms of the Water Agreement. However, as provided by the Water Agreement Section V.C, the Inyo/Los Angeles Technical Group may exempt enhancement/mitigation project wells, such as Well W375, from the well turn-off provisions of the Water Agreement if appropriate. As described in Section 2.3.9 (Hydrology and Water Quality), pumping from Well W375 is appropriate because impacts on the groundwater table would not be significant. 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.

The Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project is one of a number of enhancement/mitigation projects committed to be implemented by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee between 1970 and 1990. The September 27, 1988 final scoping document for the project, as approved by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee, provided under Section 4, *Water Supply*: “*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 enhancement/mitigation projects were evaluated in the 1991 EIR on *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* (1991 EIR). Section 13.4 of the 1991 EIR entitled, *Impacts and Mitigation Measures* states in part:

*“In the future, the export of Owens Valley water will be governed by the terms of the (Water) Agreement. **These terms include provisions for new wells and the pumping of water for enhancement/mitigation projects**”* (emphasis added).

The 1991 EIR also provides under Section S.5, *The Agreement*:

*“...all enhancement/mitigation projects implemented by the Standing Committee between 1984 and 1990 will continue. Periodic evaluations of the projects will be made by the Technical Group. **These projects will continue to be supplied with groundwater as necessary.**”* (emphasis added)

In addition to the Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project scoping document and the 1991 EIR, Section X of the Water Agreement also requires that enhancement/mitigation projects be supplied with groundwater as necessary:

“X. ENHANCEMENT/MITIGATION PROJECTS

All existing enhancement/mitigation projects will continue unless the Inyo County Board of Supervisors and the Department, acting through the Standing Committee agree to modify or discontinue a project. Periodic evaluations of the projects shall be made by the Technical

Section 1 – Project and Agency Information

*Group. Subject to the provisions of section VI, **enhancement/mitigation projects shall continue to be supplied by enhancement/mitigation wells as necessary.** New enhancement projects will be implemented if such projects are approved by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors and the Department, acting through the Standing Committee” (emphasis added).*

Moreover, Section III of the Stipulation and Order in California Superior Court Case No. 12908 (Stipulation and Order) states the overall goal of the Water Agreement:

*“The overall goal of managing the water resources within Inyo County is to avoid certain described decreases and changes in vegetation and to cause no significant effect on the environment which cannot be acceptably mitigated **while providing a reliable supply of water for export to Los Angeles and for use in Inyo County**” (emphasis added).*

Section XXII of the Stipulation and Order provides:

“Any water right of either the County or of Los Angeles or of any other person existing prior to the entry of this Stipulation and Order will not be adversely affected, directly or indirectly, by this Stipulation and Order.”

Operating Well W375 to provide make-up water for the Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project is consistent with the project scoping documents approved by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee, the 1991 EIR, and the Water Agreement. Pumping make-up water for the project complies with the overall goal of the Water Agreement to provide *a reliable supply of water for export to Los Angeles and for use in Inyo County* while avoiding violation of Water Agreement Section XXII by adversely affecting the existing water rights of the City of Los Angeles.

The project was approved by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee in September 1988, and the revisions were approved in November 2010.

Other Approvals

LADWP will obtain a project-specific Streambed Alteration Agreement for the construction of the sump facility adjacent to Big Pine Canal prior to construction. Routine maintenance of irrigation conveyance features within LADWP’s system is covered by an existing Routine Maintenance Agreement between California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and LADWP (2008). LADWP will request an Amendment to the Routine Maintenance Agreement after construction is complete to cover on-going maintenance of the new facility. LADWP will comply with all applicable regulations and obtain applicable permits, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Stormwater Permit since project construction will disturb an area greater than 1 acre.

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.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Traffic
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems
<input type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> 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: _____

Title: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

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.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Traffic
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems
<input type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> 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: Charles C. Holloway

Title: Manager of Environmental Assessment and Planning

Printed Name: Charles C. Holloway

Date: 11/10/2011

Section 2 – Environmental Analysis

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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

The proposed project site is sparsely vegetated with rabbitbrush, native grasses, and annual forbs. The project site is disturbed with numerous dirt roads. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375 to supply the project with make-up water. Well W375 is located in a vegetation parcel mapped as Nevada Saltbush Scrub (comprised of *Atriplex torreyi*, *Ericameria nauseosa*, *Artemisia tridentata*, *Sporobolus airoides*, *Sarcobatus vermiculatus*, and *Distichlis spicata*). Figure 6, from a recent site visit (September, 2011) confirmed the vegetation composition. Based on analysis presented in the Hydrology Section, there will not be significant impacts to hydrology and vegetation; therefore, there will be no significant aesthetic impacts from this portion of the project.

Figure 5
Pre-Project Site Conditions



Figure 6
Existing Well W375 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. Additionally, there will be no changes at the Well W375 site. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

Section 2 – Environmental Analysis

- 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. Well W375 (proposed to supply makeup water for the project) is an existing well and is not close to any scenic highway. 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. Well W375 (proposed to supply makeup water for the project) is an existing well. The predicted drawdown, see Hydrology section, will not adversely affect the phreatophytic communities in the vicinity of the well. The impact on visual character of the project site and the Well W375 site will be less than significant.
- d) **No Impact.** Since no new lighting is proposed at the 30 acre project site or at the existing Well W375, 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.

Section 2 – Environmental Analysis

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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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.** No part of the project is 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.** No part of the project is zoned as forested land, nor will the proposed project result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Public Resources Code Section 12220

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(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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

- a) 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 PM₁₀ 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 PM₁₀. 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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from an existing well, W375, to supply the project with water. Since this is an existing well, there will be no construction in this area that would create air pollutant emissions. Additionally, based on analysis presented in the Hydrology Section, there will not be significant impacts to hydrology and vegetation from this portion of the project that would result in erosion or dust generation.
- b) **No Impact.** The relevant air quality plan for the project area is the *Final 2008 Owens Valley PM₁₀ 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.
- c) **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

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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 PM₁₀. 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 leaving the property and to maintain compliance with the PM₁₀ 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 anticipated to be visible off the project site. Therefore, project related impacts on PM₁₀ 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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. Type E classification is comprised of areas where water is provided to City-owned lands for alfalfa production, pasture, recreation uses, wildlife habitats, livestock, and enhancement/mitigation projects (Water Agreement). Implementation of the project will require an amendment to the Big Pine Quadrangle Vegetation Management Map that is incorporated into the Agreement. Vegetation at Well W375 was mapped as Nevada Saltbush Scrub (comprised of *Atriplex torreyi*, *Ericameria nauseosa*, *Artemisia tridentata*, *Sporobolus airoides*, *Sarcobatus vermiculatus*, and *Distichlis*

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spicata). Figure 6 from a recent site visit (September, 2011) confirmed the vegetation composition. Well W375 will be pumped to supply the project with up to 150 acre feet of make-up water annually. Since this is an existing well, there will be no construction in this area to disturb the vegetation or wildlife habitat in this area. Additionally, based on analysis presented in the Hydrology Section, there will not be significant impacts to hydrology from this portion of the project that would adversely affect phreatophytic vegetation.

- 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 30 acre project area and seeding the site with a pasture mix that will support livestock grazing. This mix would be commercially modified for increased productivity and palatability, and will include clovers, legumes, and perennial grasses.

Based on California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) 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 townsendii*) (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 oryctes (*Oryctes nevadensis*)
- Parish's popcorn-flower (*Plagiobothrys parishii*)
- Shockley's milk-vetch (*Astragalus serenoii* 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,

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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 (March 1 through September 15) will also be surveyed for the presence of active nests. A qualified LADWP biologist will visit the project site 48 hours prior to construction activities commencing and survey for active raptor and bird nests. If an active nest is found, clearing and construction within 300 feet of the nest or 500 feet of a raptor nest will be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and when there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. 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 serenoii* var. *shockleyi*, *Chaetodelpha wheeleri*, *Aliciella triodon*, and *Loeflingia squarrosa* var. *artemisiarum* occur for the USGS quad sheet. At the March 2011 site visit, and at numerous site visits during the growing season, a vegetation inventory (Appendix D) was performed and no sensitive plant species were found within the project site. 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.

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- 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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. Additionally, a California Historical Resources Information System search was conducted for the proposed project and did not reveal any previously recorded archaeological sites. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Since this is an existing well, there will be no construction in this area, and therefore no impacts to cultural resources.

- 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.

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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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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).

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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).

The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Since this is an existing well, there will be no construction in this area to impact the geology and soils in the area. Additionally, based on analysis presented in Hydrology Section), there will not be significant impacts to hydrology from this portion of the project to adversely affect phreatophytic vegetation and thus, use of water from Well W375 will not significantly impact top soil or create erosion.

- 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Well W375 is an existing facility pumped by a 150 horsepower electric motor. Emission related to the electric power generation necessary for pump operation would be less than significant.
- b) **No Impact.** The following policies and regulations are relevant to climate change in California:

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- **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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Since Well W375 is an existing structure there will be no new hazards or hazardous materials at this site.

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

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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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

A maximum of 150 acre-feet of irrigation water annually will be supplied to the project pasture area via surface water obtained from the Big Pine Canal. A commensurate amount of make-up groundwater will be pumped from an existing well, W375, located approximately 3 miles southeast of the project pasture area. The relationship of the project pasture area to Well W375 is shown on Figure 3. The current pumping capacity of Well W375 is approximately 5.5 cubic

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feet per second (cfs). Based upon maximum project demand, Well W375 is capable of pumping the annual replacement groundwater in approximately two weeks.

A key issue for consideration is the potential impact on the environment of pumping Well W375 to produce 150 acre-feet of water or less. In evaluating this potential impact, the hydrogeology and well construction details of W375 are important factors to consider. The hydrogeology in the area of Well W375 includes a shallow unconfined aquifer and deeper confined aquifer separated by an approximately 60 foot thick low-permeability clay layer (Figure 7: USGS Water Supply Paper 2370-H Cross Section B-B). Well W375 is constructed with a total depth of 450 feet and is screened to extract groundwater only from the deeper confined aquifer between 260 feet and 440 feet. Because the well is constructed in the deepest aquifer and separated from the shallow aquifer by a low-permeability layer, groundwater pumping from Well W375 has a limited effect on the shallow aquifer.

The potential impact of pumping Well W375 on shallow water levels (and subsequent impacts on vegetation and soils) has been quantified using two entirely different methods:

- 1) Comparison to actual field (operational) testing of the well, and;
- 2) Use of a previously-constructed groundwater model of the Owens Valley.

These two methods, along with the results of the analysis, are described in more detail below.

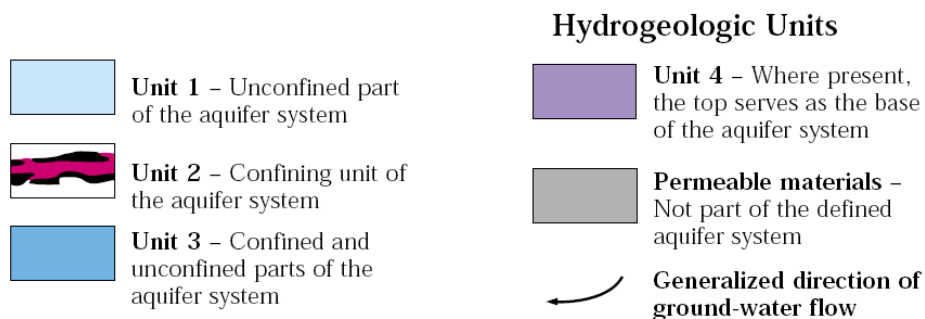
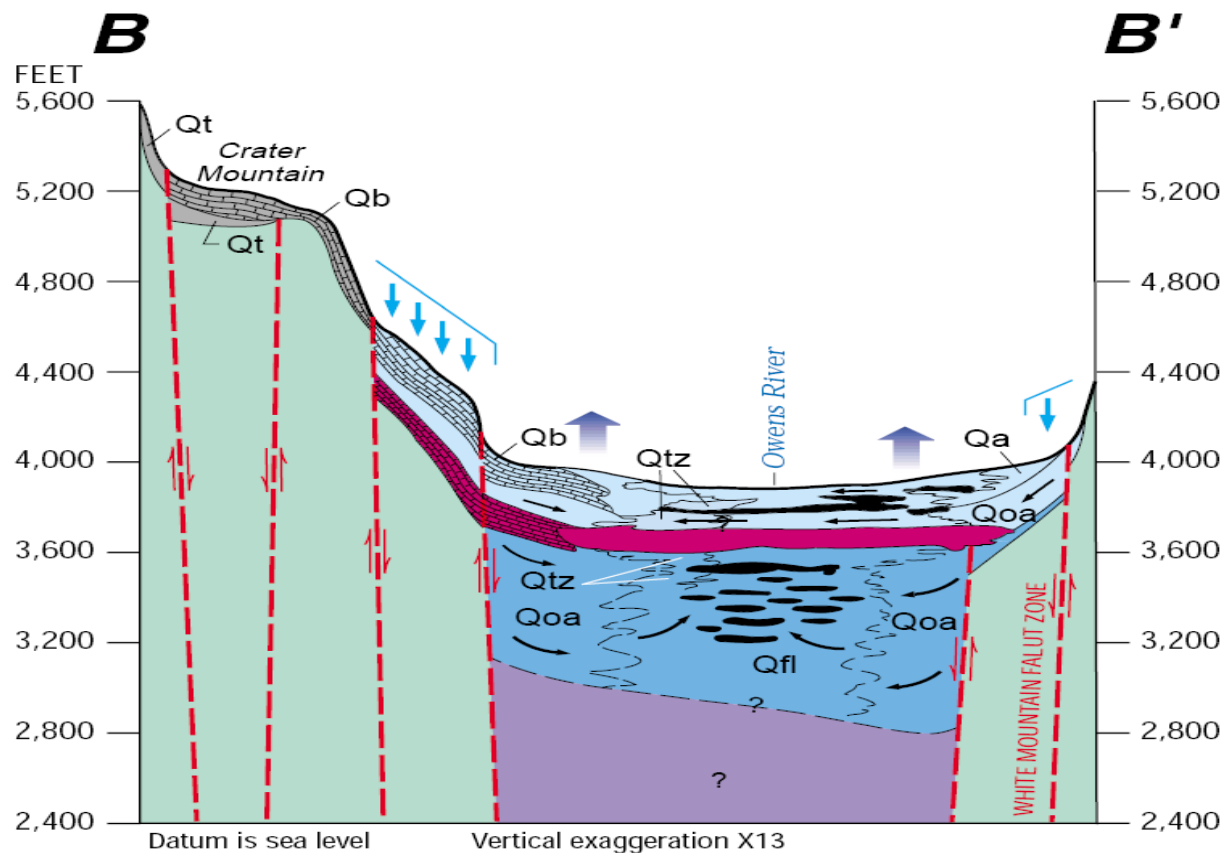
Operational Testing

In 1997 and 1998, an “operational test” was conducted on Well W375. The operational test consisted of pumping the well continuously at its full capacity for a period of approximately nine months. During this period of time, the change in water levels in twelve (12) deep monitoring wells and twenty (20) shallow monitoring wells was carefully monitored and documented. The monitoring wells were dispersed over a wide area ranging from approximately 0.1 to 3 miles away from Well W375. The operational testing is significant because it represents actual field data whereby Well W375 was pumped continuously for a long period of time, and the effects on the shallow water table were documented. Thus, the results are based on measured field data and do not depend on estimates of uncertain parameters or modeling methods which have inherent uncertainty.

The results of the operational test are included in Appendix C. Operational testing of Well W375 indicated that continuous pumping of the well for approximately nine months did not induce a discernable drawdown in the shallow aquifer (Appendix C, page 28). It is therefore concluded that a pumping volume of nearly 15 times less than the operational test, and for a period of time of less than 2 percent of the operational test will also have an indiscernible impact on the shallow aquifer which supports vegetation.

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Figure 7
USGS Water Supply Paper 2370- Cross Section B-B



Notes:

East-West geologic cross section of Owens Valley in Big Pine. From Figure 5, page 19 of the USGS Water Supply Paper 2370-H, titled Evaluation of the Hydrologic System and Selected Water-Management Alternatives in the Owens Valley, California

Well W375 is located west of Owens River and is screened only within unit 3, the confined aquifer, below the confining Unit that separates Unit 1 (shallow aquifer) and Unit 3 (deep aquifer).

Groundwater Modeling

As a second analysis method, the Inyo County Water Department Director/senior hydrologist, Dr. Robert Harrington, performed a modeling analysis on potential effects of groundwater pumping to supply the Big Pine Northeast Regreening Project. A description of this work is included in Appendix B.

To evaluate the effects of different pumping locations on the water table, the a regional groundwater model for the Owens Valley was used to examine the effect of project pumping on water table elevations in the Big Pine area. This groundwater model was originally developed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) as part of a larger program to evaluate the relationship of groundwater pumping and vegetation (USGS Water Supply Paper 2370-H, 1998)

Using the model, 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 long term drawdown of operating Well W375 for project make-up water on the deep aquifer is too small (predicted shallow water table drawdown of less than 3 inches) to measurably affect the shallow aquifer dependent vegetation (phreatophytic communities) in the vicinity of the well. The model is conservative and overestimates the drawdown induced by operating Well W375 for project make-up water. If factors such as stream capture by the pumping well and irrigation return flow to the shallow aquifer were included, the predicted drawdown would be reduced and the water table in the vicinity of the regreening area will increase. (Appendix B & E, August 30, 2011 Inyo County Water Department Letter). These results were presented by the Technical Group to the Standing Committee at a public meeting in November, 2010 in which local citizens were able to comment on the proposed project.

Groundwater models have inherent limitations because they are generalizations of the groundwater system. Nevertheless, they represent the best-available tools to analyze long-term effects of groundwater pumping. The fact that the groundwater model simulations agree well with actual field testing (documented in the operational test described in Appendix C) provides much higher confidence in the modeling results.

Conclusion

Based on field results from the operational testing (Appendix C), and groundwater modeling analysis (Appendix B), pumping 150 acre-feet per year from Well W375 will have a less than significant impact to the hydrology of the area and phreatophytic vegetation. The 150 acre-feet per year can be produced from the well in a period of approximately two weeks. During these two weeks, the drop in water table in the vicinity of the well (where the greatest impacts are expected) is expected to be less than 1 inch, and less than 1 inch at greater distances from the well. The water table level is expected to substantially recover within two weeks after termination of make-up water pumping, although there will be a slight long-term cumulative decline. Long-term water table drawdown over a period of over 10 years or more in the vicinity of the well is predicted to be less than 3 inches based on long-term modeling (Appendix B). These fluctuations are well within the natural fluctuations currently observed and are therefore not expected to have a significant impact on soils or vegetation.

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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 site construction, minor disturbance will occur in Big Pine Canal to install the 4 ft x 4 ft x 5 ft concrete basin and soil disturbances of less than 2 acres will occur during installation of the irrigation system and site fencing. In compliance with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Permit for NPDES General Construction, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is required for all projects that disturb more than 1 acre. Accordingly, during construction of the project, stormwater will be managed in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the SWPPP to minimize sediment impacts to the Canal. Table 1 provides a summary of potential construction BMPs.

**Table 1
Summary of Potential Stormwater BMPs**

Best Management Practices for the Protection of Stormwater Quality During Construction
<u>Housekeeping Measures</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an inventory of products used or expected to be used • Cover and/or berm loose stockpiled construction materials • Store chemicals in watertight containers
<u>Employee Training</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief staff on the importance of preventing stormwater pollution • Have staff review SWPPP • Conduct refresher training during the wet season, if relevant • Document training
<u>Erosion and Sediment Controls</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain effective perimeter control • Stabilize construction entrances and exits to control sediment – inspect ingress and egress points daily, and maintain as necessary • Control dust during earthwork • Place sandbags or other barriers to direct stormwater flow to suitable basins
<u>Spill Prevention and Control</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect construction equipment for leaking • Use drip pans until equipment can be repaired • Cleanup spills immediately – remove adsorbent promptly • Notify the proper entities in the event of a spill
<u>Concrete Truck Washing Waste</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide containment for capture of wash water • Maintain containment area

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Best Management Practices for the Protection of Stormwater Quality During Construction
<u>Hazardous Waters Management and Disposal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store hazardous wastes (including fuels) in covered, labeled containers
<u>Materials Handling and Storage</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a designated area for hazardous materials (including fuels)• Berm, cover, and/or contain the storage area as necessary to prevent materials from leaking or spilling• Store the minimum volume of hazardous materials necessary for the work
<u>Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance, Repair, and Storage</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspect vehicles and equipment regularly• Conduct maintenance as necessary• Designate areas for storage – where fluids can be captured and disposed of properly
<u>Scheduling</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid work during storm events• Stabilize work areas prior to predicted storm events

Since BMPs will be implemented for the construction activities 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 (see Appendix B, Inyo County Water Department July, 2010 Report). 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 greening project will increase vegetative cover on the project site, erosion will be reduced over existing conditions, a beneficial impact on stormwater quality.

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- 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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 any 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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. The Water Agreement states under Section III that, “The overall goal of managing the water resources within Inyo County is to avoid certain described decreases and changes in vegetation and to cause no significant effect on the environment which cannot be acceptably mitigated while providing a reliable supply of water for export to Los Angeles and for use in Inyo County.” Pumping make-up water from Well W375 for the project complies with the overall goal of the Water Agreement to provide *a reliable supply of water for export to Los Angeles and for use in Inyo County* while avoiding violation of Water Agreement Section XXII of adversely affecting the existing water rights of the City of Los Angeles. 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

- a) and b) **No Impact.** There is no existing mining activity at any part of the project site. The project site to be disturbed 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Since Well W375 is an existing structure there will be no noise from construction in this area. Since Well W375 is located in a remote area away from housing and will only be operational infrequently (approximately two weeks per year), operation of the well pump will have a less than significant impacts on noise.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Since jackhammers or other equipment that causes substantial groundborne vibration will not be used for project construction, the proposed

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project will not substantially increase the exposure of persons to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. Additionally, operation of Well W375 pumps will not cause substantial vibrations.

- 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 periodic site visits and maintenance). Since Well W375 is an existing structure there will be no noise from construction in this area. Operation of Well W375 will generate noise for approximately two weeks per year. The well is located in a remote area away from noise receptors. 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. The Well W375 is located in a remote area. 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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) through c) **No Impact.** Habitable structures are not present on the project site and none are proposed in any 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) **No Impact.** Habitable structures are not present on the project site and none are proposed in any 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) and b) **No Impact.** Habitable structures and recreational facilities are not present on the project site and none are proposed in any 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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 project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375. Since Well W375 is an existing structure there will be no construction to impact traffic in this area. 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.

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- 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.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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. Pumping of Well W375 will be to make up water used to irrigate the regreened pastures. 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. Well W375 is an existing structure and no expansion of this facility is required. The project will have no impact on water utility service.

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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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, greening 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. Additionally, establishment of vegetation on the parcel will decrease dust emissions, a beneficial effect on air quality. 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.** Based Inyo County’s report and analysis, pumping from Well W375 will have a less than significant impact to the hydrology of the area and phreatophytic vegetation. Therefore, cumulative impacts from groundwater pumping are not relevant to the project for further evaluation. 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.

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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. The project also includes groundwater pumping of up to 150 acre feet annually from Well W375 to supply the project with make-up water. Based on analysis presented in the Hydrology Section, there will not be significant impacts to hydrology and vegetation; therefore, there will be no significant impacts from this portion of the project.

Section 3

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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
PM₁₀	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

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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