

HUNGRY VALLEY

State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) General Plan Update + EIR



PUBLIC INPUT SYNTHESIS REPORT #4/ SCOPING REPORT FEBRUARY 2024





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Introduction

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (State Parks) held a formal public scoping meeting on November 15, 2023. The meeting occurred during the 30-day scoping period that was initiated with the publication of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) on November 2, 2023. The scoping period meets the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) public involvement requirements for the preparation of the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In alignment with these requirements, public scoping for the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update focused on gathering input from the public and stakeholders on the environmental issues to be analyzed in the EIR. The scoping period supplements the numerous outreach efforts completed previously for the project since approximately 2016, which has consisted of public workshops, surveys, stakeholder interviews, fact sheets, and a project website with opportunities for online input. These prior outreach efforts have helped define the Preferred Alternative and the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update overall.

REPORT FOCUS

This report focuses on collating, analyzing, and presenting the public comments and feedback received during the scoping period for the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update EIR. The report provides a summary of the viewpoints, concerns, and suggestions expressed by community members, stakeholders, and other interested parties, including those received during the virtual scoping meeting.

This report highlights the primary environmental, recreational, and community-related issues raised by the public during the scoping period. These insights will help guide the scope of the analysis in the EIR, ensuring that it addresses key concerns raised while aligning with the project's goals and regulatory requirements.

Moreover, the report is designed to serve as a bridge between public input and agency decision-making, facilitating a transparent and inclusive planning process. It underscores the project's commitment to community engagement and environmental stewardship, laying a foundation for informed and sustainable decisions in Hungry Valley SVRA.

ABOUT HUNGRY VALLEY SVRA

Hungry Valley SVRA is a popular recreation area for off-highway vehicle (OHV) users and other recreationists from Southern and Central California. The roughly 20,000-acre Hungry Valley SVRA is located approximately 60 miles north of downtown Los Angeles along Interstate 5 and is part of Ventura, Kern, and Los Angeles Counties. Hungry Valley SVRA provides a unique experience for OHV users. Hungry Valley SVRA provides over 130 miles of trails for OHV recreation with a wide variety of terrain types and topographic features that appeal to many types of OHV enthusiasts and other outdoor recreationists.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update, which is considered the proposed project for purposes of CEQA, establishes the long-range purpose and vision for Hungry Valley SVRA and would update the current General Plan adopted in 1981. The purpose of Hungry Valley SVRA is to provide a destination for OHV recreation use and to offer a unique experience for visitors in and around the Southern California region. Hungry Valley SVRA includes six land use areas with different characteristics, allowable activities and uses, resources, and related management guidance. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the existing land use designations while modifying allowable OHV recreation boundaries of select areas. State Parks would manage natural, cultural, and physical resources to protect the resources' integrity in alignment with the goals and guidelines established in the proposed General Plan Update.



Public Outreach and Scoping Summary

During the NOP scoping period, a broad range of activities were undertaken to engage the public and stakeholders effectively. In compliance with CEQA, the NOP scoping phase for the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update EIR involved a 30-day public comment period to gather feedback on potential environmental impacts to be considered in the EIR. This phase, which extended from November 2, 2023, to December 1, 2023, included a virtual meeting held on November 15, 2023. The EIR will integrate the public input received during scoping to ensure significant environmental impacts are considered during the decision-making process. The public outreach strategy encompassed various channels to ensure broad participation in the process; outreach efforts are described further below.

The NOP was published to the Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse on November 2, 2023, to begin the scoping period. The NOP was also filed with the County Clerk-Recorder Offices in Ventura, Los Angeles, and Kern Counties. An email blast notifying availability of the NOP and the virtual scoping meeting was sent on November 2, 2023, to a comprehensive distribution list, including regulatory agencies, local organizations, counties and cities, and members of the public. Follow-up email

reminders were sent the day before the public scoping meeting and to specify the end of the scoping period. Letters were also mailed to contacts on the distribution list when email addresses were unavailable. Further, the NOP was published via newspaper ads in the Bakersfield Californian on November 5 and 13, 2023 and Los Angeles Times on November 18, 2023.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website was originally launched in April 2016. The website has been, and continues to be, used to post project information and solicit feedback from the public. The website is available at www.planhungryvalley.com.

The project website serves as a central hub for information dissemination and public engagement. Designed for accessibility and ease of use, the website provides comprehensive information, including project details, timelines, documentation, and ways for the public to participate in the process.

Regular updates are posted to keep the community informed about the latest developments, upcoming events, and opportunities for public involvement. On November 2, 2023, the NOP was posted to the

website, to align with the beginning of the 30-day public comment period as required by CEQA. The website featured an interactive form for public comments, allowing visitors to easily submit their comments during the scoping period.

VIRTUAL SCOPING MEETING

The virtual scoping meeting, held on November 15, 2023, was a key event in the public engagement process. This meeting provided an opportunity for direct interaction between the project team, the community, and stakeholders. It included presentations on the project's goals and objectives, potential environmental impacts,

and the CEQA process, followed by a Q&A session. The feedback received during this meeting helped reinforce an understanding of community perspectives and concerns related to the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update and EIR. Oral comments were accepted and responded to at the meeting; however, for public comments to be formally considered as part of the public record, they were requested in writing. The meeting was recorded and made available on the project website for those who could not attend. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included as Appendix A.



Summary of Comments Received



This section provides a comprehensive summary of the comments and feedback received from the public and stakeholders during the NOP scoping period. The EIR will consider all formal comments submitted relevant to environmental issues associated with the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update. Other issues raised, related to project components, design, or future use of the park, will also be considered during development of the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update.

The feedback encompasses a variety of themes and topics, ranging from environmental impact concerns to recreational use of Hungry Valley SVRA and overall park management. All comments have been reviewed and a summary

of key patterns, prevalent concerns, and areas of consensus are provided here. This synthesis will help guide the project's next steps, particularly in refining the EIR's focus and ensuring that the project development aligns with both regulatory requirements and community expectations. Comments will not be formally responded to; however, the input received will be considered in the preparation of the EIR. All formally submitted comments are available in Appendix B and summarized in Table 1 below. The comments received in writing are considered part of the public record under CEQA. Oral comments from the public scoping meeting are also summarized in Table 2 below for informational purposes.

Table 1. Formal Public Comment Summary

Commenting Entity (Agency/ Organization/Individual)	General Theme of Comment(s)	Date
Dillon Murray, Cultural Heritage Program Planner, Ventura County Planning Division (Comment Letter)	Protection of cultural resources	November 2, 2023
Cameron Vela, Cultural Resources Analyst, Native American Heritage Commission (Comment Letter)	Protection of tribal cultural resources, compliance with Assembly Bill 52	November 2, 2023
Chuck Willhite (Comment Letter)	One-way trails, motocross track, course grooming/watering	November 13, 2023
Roxy Cabral, R.E.H.S., Land Use Section, Environmental Health Division, Ventura County (Comment Letter)	Concession stands and food facilities permitting	November 20, 2023
David Hess (Comment Letter)	Improvement of recreation experience, location of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, use of automated technology to improve park	November 23, 2023
Nicole Collazo, Air Quality Specialist, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (Comment Letter)	Air quality impact analysis	November 28, 2023
Amy Granat, Managing Director, California Off-Road Vehicle Association (Comment Letter)	Viability and appropriateness of facilities identified in the NOP, funding sources	November 28, 2023
Kristeen Penrod, Director, Science & Collaboration for Connected Wildlands (Comment Letter)	Wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity	December 1, 2023
Bryant Baker, M.S., Director of Conservation & Research, Los Padres ForestWatch (Comment Letter)	Protection of Los Padres National Forest, trail connections from Hungry Valley SVRA, wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity	December 1, 2023
Dave Ward, AICP, Planning Director, County of Ventura, Planning Division (Comment Letter)	General Plan EIR process, wildlife corridors	December 4, 2023
Bruce Weihs, Senior Oil and Gas Engineer, DOC (Comment Letter)	Oil and gas wells, potential project conflicts	December 5, 2023
David Mayer, Environmental Program Manager, South Coast Region, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Comment Letter)	Identifying and mitigating project impacts on biological resources	December 18, 2023

Table 2. Public Scoping Meeting Oral Comments

Commenting Entity (Agency/ Organization/Individual)	General Theme of Comment(s)	Date
Oral comments received from various individuals at public scoping meeting	Topics ranged from OHV access, trail use, placement of EV charging stations, population growth, and park modernization.	November 15, 2023

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING

The intent of this section is to highlight the substantive environmental issues that were identified through the scoping process. Accordingly, this section does not summarize the most frequent comments and instead identifies a cross-section of key issues relevant to the CEQA process. Comments related to planning issues that are not relevant to the CEQA process (e.g., future park management, facilities use, etc.) are also summarized below for informational purposes. The issues described below include written comments from agencies, stakeholders, and the general public.

It is important to note that this section does not identify all issues that will be analyzed in the EIR; rather, it identifies key issues raised during scoping. The EIR will address the full scope of environmental issues required by CEQA and will not be limited to the topics raised in the scoping process. The complete record of comments compiled in Appendix B will be considered for their applicability to define the range of actions, potential to avoid or reduce environmental impacts, or as mitigation measures.

Air Quality

The air quality assessment should consider project consistency with the Ventura County 2022 Air Quality Management Plan and evaluate emissions from all project-related activities. It was recommended to incorporate construction emission reduction measures and evaluate impacts in alignment with the state CEQA

guidelines and other local standards, such as the Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines.

Biological Resources

The need to balance OHV use with wildlife protection was a primary concern. Recommendations included ensuring the project considers wildlife movement; reducing impacts of OHV use on wildlife; and adopting ordinances for lighting, fencing, and locating facilities to protect wildlife corridors. The value of Hungry Valley SVRA and surrounding lands as wildlife corridors as well as the need to maintain these linkages with project implementation was emphasized in multiple comments. Support was stated for the proposed General Plan Update and its focus on expanding recreational boundaries while protecting habitat areas. Additionally, the need for detailed analysis in the EIR of the potential impacts on habitats and ecosystems was emphasized, particularly related to impacts of OHV trails and recreation areas, and on the preservation of existing wildlife corridors in and around the project area through establishment of park management plans and coordination with transportation agencies. Comprehensive biological surveys and inventory of flora and fauna should be completed for the EIR.

Cultural, Tribal, and Paleontological Resources

The importance of protecting historical, paleontological, and cultural resources in the planning area was noted. It was suggested that the project include goals, policies, and programs for the treatment of these resources and assess the historical significance of older sites.



Consideration of properties 50 years of age or greater was mentioned as a general standard for consistency with federal and state requirements.

Emphasis on the protection of tribal cultural resources, the need for early consultation with California Native American tribes, and the consideration of tribal cultural values in project planning and execution was also highlighted. Compliance with state regulations like CEQA, Assembly Bill 52, and Senate Bill 18, particularly in relation to tribal consultation and environmental impact analysis, was emphasized.

Land Use and Planning

Concerns were raised about how trail connections will be managed, especially to Los Padres National Forest. The need for cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service was emphasized, and for trail management to not increase unauthorized use or trespass off designated routes. The importance of

aligning trail restrictions and management with adjacent areas was also mentioned.

Mineral Resources, Utilities

Concerns were expressed about development near oil, gas, or geothermal wells within the project area. Several wells in and around the project area were identified that may have not been properly abandoned or disposed of and would require consideration in compliance with state law. The input received advised against building over or impeding access to such wells. The potential dangers of wells leaking in the future were stressed, and testing was recommended to mitigate these effects. If wells are impacted by construction, they may need re-abandonment. It was emphasized that property owners or entities proposing construction near the wells may be responsible for potential re-abandonment costs.

Public Services and Recreation, Population

The importance of balancing conservation efforts with maintaining and expanding OHV access was highlighted. Commenters expressed the need for a no-net loss approach where any closed or modified trails are compensated with new or expanded trails elsewhere.

The need to consider population growth and its impact on park use was emphasized. It was recommended that the project address growth expectations and potential user conflicts, given the park's popularity and diverse user base. Strategies that focus on core values and efficient management were advocated for, including leveraging technology for operations like gate access.

Wildfire

The potential wildfire risk of electric vehicle charging infrastructure was mentioned and requested to be assessed in the EIR.

ISSUES UNRELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Comments received that were outside the scope of the EIR included the following topic areas and general themes:

- Concerns raised about potential increases in fees.
- Questions raised about safety measures in the park, especially concerning interactions between different types of vehicles (e.g., four-wheel drives, dirt bikes). The maintenance of trails, including those affected by weather, was also a topic of discussion.
- The importance of enhancing the recreational experience for various off-road enthusiasts was stressed. The project should address the diverse needs of users, including those affected by trail closures or changes in available roads and trails.
- There were discussions about the current

policy of free access through the park to Los Padres National Forest and whether this would be affected by the proposed project.

- The introduction of EV charging stations in the park was discussed, including concerns about financing (particularly the use of OHV Trust Fund money), impact on the park's budget, and potential for these stations to attract non-park users (e.g., travelers on Interstate 5 [I-5]). Suggestions included situating stations within the park, away from I-5, and starting with a smaller number of stations that could increase as demand grows.
- Requests were made for automation of various park facilities, such as entrance stations and gates throughout the park.
- Comments were raised about the viability or appropriateness of various facilities identified in the NOP, such as the RV Campground in the Condor Mesa Area, UAV use in the Quail Canyon Special Event Area, and EV charging stations as mentioned above.
- Participants discussed the process for obtaining permits for special events. There were concerns about the initial response often being perceived as negative and the need for a clearer, more streamlined process.
- The need for plan review and permitting by the Ventura County Environmental Health Division for food facilities within the project area was mentioned.
- It was suggested that the draft General Plan Update should have been available for review during the EIR scoping process to allow for more detailed review and comment.

Although not pertinent to the environmental analysis, these comments would be considered as part of the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update and during ongoing and future park management.

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Appendix A

Scoping Meeting PowerPoint

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Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update

Scoping Meeting for the
Environmental Impact Report

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

6:00PM - 7:30PM



Welcome!

Agenda

- Introduction and Purpose
- Overview of General Plan Update
- Environmental Review Process
- Questions and Answers





Introduction and Purpose

Project Team

California State Parks

- Katie Metraux, General Plan Project Manager
- Chris Hon, District Senior Environmental Scientist
- Russ Dingman, District Superintendent

AECOM – General Plan and EIR consultant

- Valarie Yruretagoyena, Project Manager
- Danny DeBrito, Deputy Project Manager
- Dalis De La Mora, Environmental Planner

Purpose of EIR Scoping Meeting

- Inform agencies and the general public about the Hungry Valley General Plan Update
- Inform agencies and the general public about the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process and scope
- Inform the public about how to submit comments and future opportunities for input
- Provide an opportunity for oral comments and questions on EIR scope of work and the proposed project in general

Step-by-Step: Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan + EIR

- 1 Project Start-Up & Public Participation★
- 2 Draft Guiding Statements★
- 3 Existing Conditions
- 4 Draft Planning Concepts★
- 5 Preferred Planning Concept★
- 6 **Preliminary General Plan + Draft EIR★**
- 7 **Draft General Plan + Final EIR★**
- 8 **Final General Plan + Certified EIR★**

- Completed Step in Planning Process
- Current Step in Planning Process
- Future Step in Planning Process
- ★ Opportunities to Get Involved

General Plan Update Process



Overview of General Plan Update

What is a General Plan?

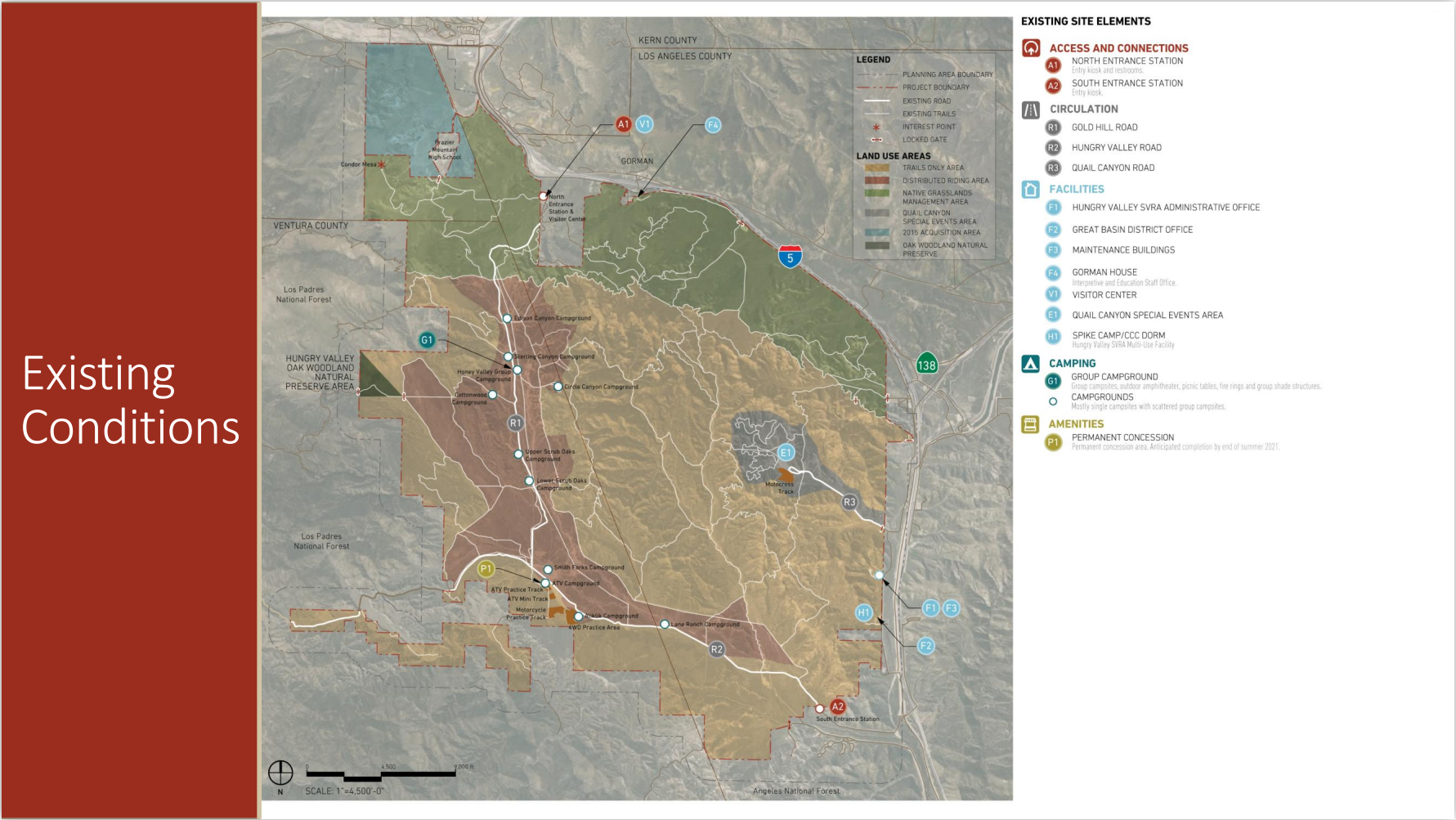
- Guides future development and enhancement of the park for the next 20 to 30 years
- Establishes a long-term vision and goals
- Identifies potential improvements
- Directs future management, resource stewardship, and public use
- Identify future acquisition opportunities

Why Update the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan?

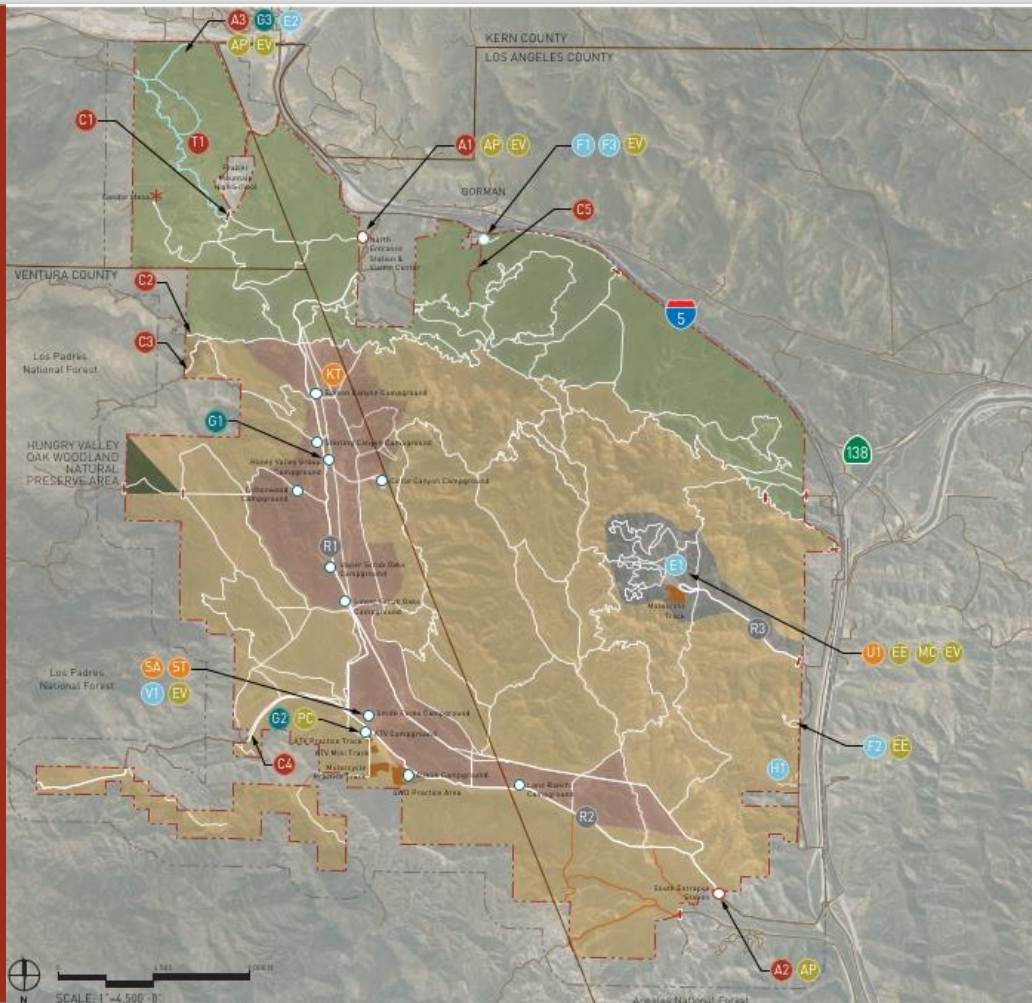
- Existing General Plan adopted in 1981
- New State Parks Planning Guidelines
- New OHV and environmental laws
- New land acquisitions since 1981
- Changing conditions and uses
- Establish future policies to guide park management

Proposed General Plan Update

- **Document Format**
 - **Chapter 1** – Introduction
 - **Chapter 2** – Existing Conditions
 - **Chapter 3** – Issues and Opportunities
 - **Chapter 4** – The Plan



Preferred Alternative



LEGEND

- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED TRAILS
- DAM TRAILS
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING TRAILS
- * INTEREST POINT
- LOCKED GATE

LAND USE AREAS*

- TRAILS ONLY AREA
- DISTRIBUTED RIDING AREA
- NATIVE GRASSLANDS MANAGEMENT AREA
- QUAIL CANYON SPECIAL EVENT AREA
- OAK WOODLAND NATURAL PRESERVE

*CULTURAL PRESERVES - LOCATION CONFIDENTIAL

EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE ELEMENTS E- EXISTING P- PROPOSED

ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

- A1 E- NORTH ENTRANCE STATION
- A2 E- SOUTH ENTRANCE STATION
- P FRAZER MOUNTAIN PARK ROAD ENTRY
- C1 E- CONNECTION FROM STPA TRAIL
- C2 E- FORMAL CONNECTION TO EAST FRAZER TRAIL
- C3 E- FORMAL CONNECTION TO TEJON TRAIL
- P CONNECTION TO ROAD RUNNER TRAIL
- P STAFF CONNECTION FROM OFFICE BUILDINGS TO PARK
- T1 P- TRAIL

CIRCULATION

- G1 E- GOLD HILL ROAD - Repave
- G2 E- HUNGRY VALLEY ROAD - Pave
- G3 E- QUAIL CANYON ROAD - Pave

FACILITIES

- P HUNGRY VALLEY SVRA OPERATIONAL SUPPORT OFFICES
- E MAINTENANCE AND ADMIN BUILDINGS - Upgrade
- E GORMAN HOUSE - Upgrade
- E RANGER STATION
- P VISITOR CENTER
- E QUAIL CANYON SPECIAL EVENT AREA
- P COMMUNITY EVENT AREA
- E SPIKE CAMP/CCC DOIRM

CAMPING

- G1 E- GROUP CAMPGROUND
- G2 P- GROUP CAMPGROUND
- O E- CAMPGROUNDS
- P RV CAMPGROUND

RECREATION

- P UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (UAV) AREA
- P SKILL TRACK
- P KID'S PRACTICE TRACK
- P STAGING AREA

AMENITIES

- P AUTOMATIC PAYMENT SYSTEM
- E ELECTRICAL VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS
- P ELECTRICAL VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS
- E PERMANENT CONCESSION
- P MOBILE CONCESSION

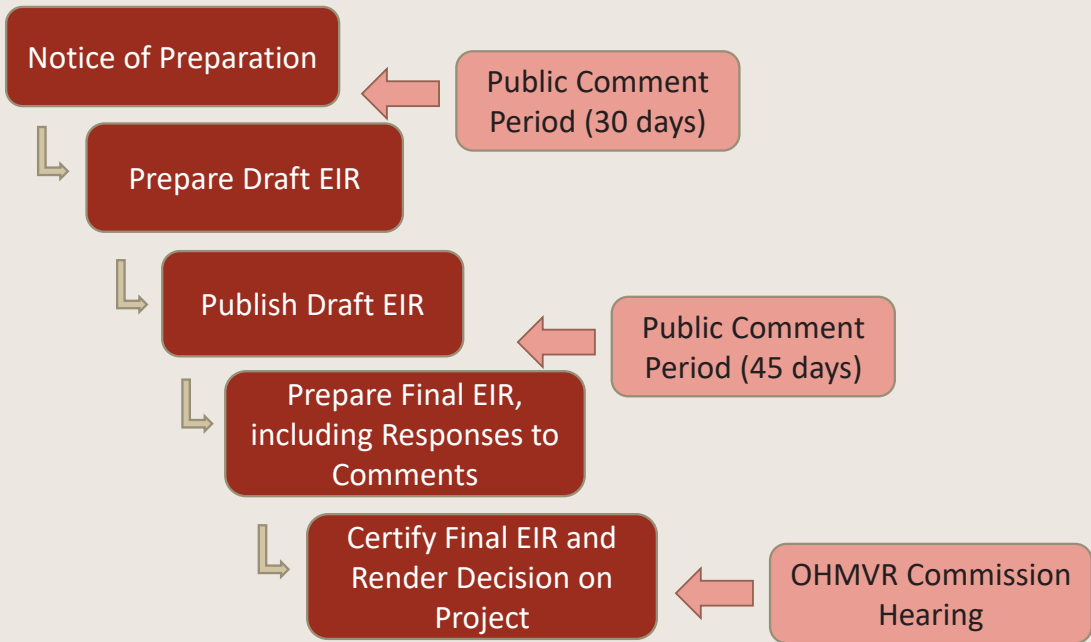


Environmental Review Process

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- Applies to “**projects**”
 - A discretionary action by a public agency that has the potential to result in a physical change in the environment, either directly or indirectly
 - General Plan Update is considered a “**project**” under CEQA
- **CEQA Lead Agency – California State Parks**
 - Inform agency decision-makers and public of any significant environmental effects
 - Identify feasible ways to avoid or reduce significant impacts, including mitigation measures and alternatives
 - Provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the environmental analysis

EIR Process per CEQA



EIR Topics

- Aesthetics
 - Air Quality
 - Biological Resources
 - Geology/Soils and Paleontological Resources
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials
 - Hydrology and Water Quality
 - Noise
 - Recreation
 - Transportation
 - Tribal and Cultural Resources
 - Utilities and Service Systems
 - Wildfire
- Required CEQA Sections
 - Growth Inducement
 - Cumulative Impacts
 - Alternatives
 - Impacts Found to Not Be Significant
 - Summary of Impacts

How to Provide Comments

- Send written responses to the following contact:
 - Katie Metraux, Project Manager
 - Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
 - P.O. Box 942896
 - Sacramento, California 92496
- Use the comment form on the project website (www.planhungryvalley.com)
- Send an email to the project email (info@PlanHungryValley.com)

Questions & Answers

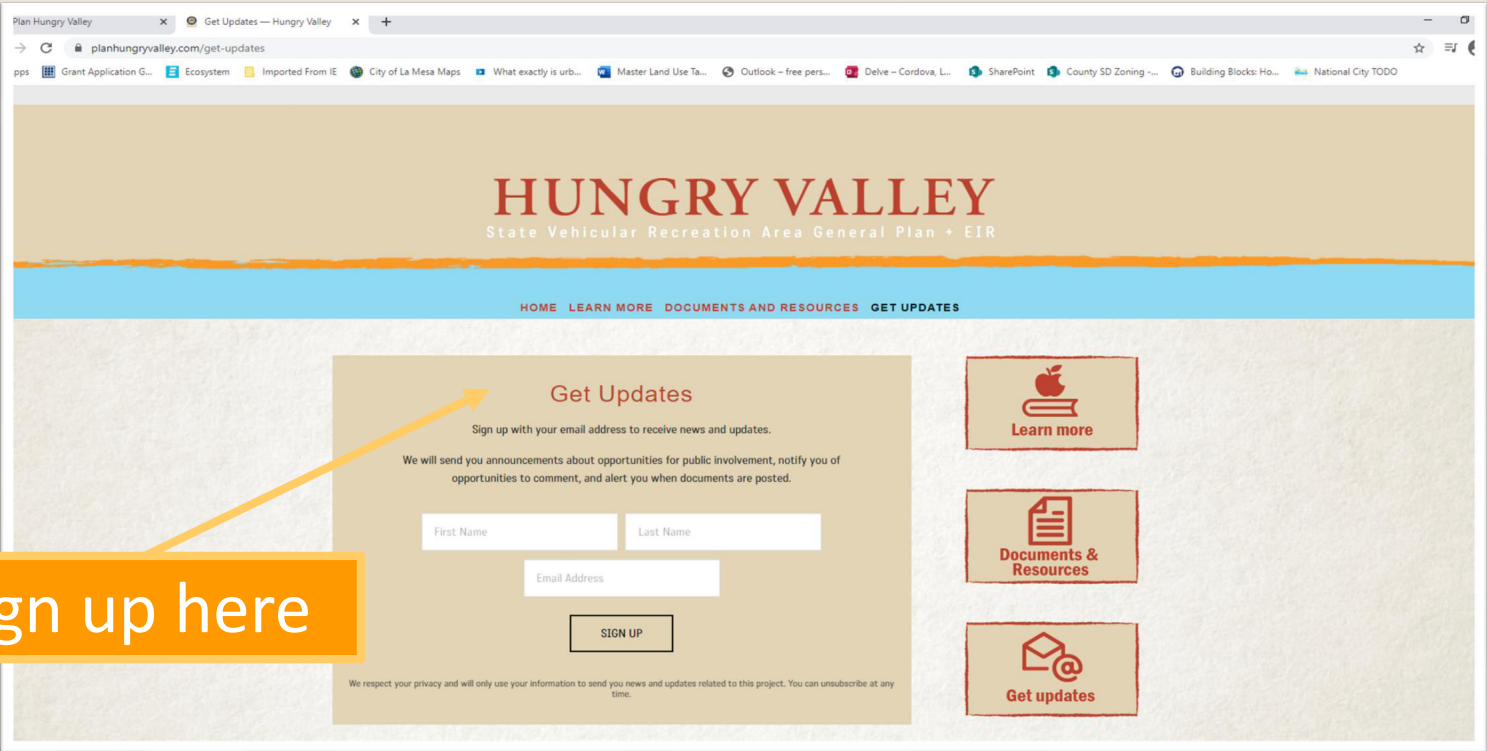


Get Involved: We want to hear from you!

Visit the Project Website



Join the Notification List



Sign up here



Next Steps

Next Steps

- Prepare draft General Plan Update and EIR
- Once prepared, public review of General Plan Update and EIR
 - 45-day public comment period for draft EIR
- Prepare Final EIR, including response to comments received
- Finalize General Plan Update and EIR
- OHMVR Commission hearing on General Plan Update and EIR



THANK YOU!

Website: www.PlanHungryValley.com
Email: info@planhungryvalley.com

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Appendix B

Formal Public Comments



COUNTY of VENTURA

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
DAVE WARD
 Planning Director

SUSAN CURTIS
 Assistant Planning Director

November 2, 2023

Anthony Ciuffetelli
 RMA/Planning/EDR Coordinator

Sent via email: anthony.ciuffetelli@ventura.org

SUBJECT: Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update Project
RMA Ref# 23-019

To Whom It May Concern,

Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) staff is in receipt of the invitation to comment on the above-referenced project and provides the following comments:

- For areas of the Hungry Valley SVRA planning area that have not yet been surveyed, historic resources may exist that have not yet been documented. Increased amenities and more transportation infrastructure could lead to direct and indirect impacts on historic, paleontological, and cultural resources from greater public access to them and proposed development activities.
- The California Department of Parks and Recreation should set forth goals, policies and programs within the General Plan regarding the treatment of historic and cultural resources and evaluating the historical significance of those sites that contain buildings, structures, and objects that are fifty years of age or older. Fifty years of age is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This is a standard used by the Federal and State governments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If you require anything further or have any questions, please contact Dillan Murray at (805) 654-5042 or at Dillan.Murray@ventura.org.

Sincerely,

Dillan Murray
 Cultural Heritage Program Planner
 Ventura County Planning Division

HALL OF ADMINISTRATION #1740

(805) 654-2481 • FAX (805) 654-2509 • 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • vcrma.org



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Gavin Newsom, Governor

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

November 2, 2023

Katie Metraux
California Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 92496

CHAIRPERSON
Reginald Pagaling
Chumash

VICE-CHAIRPERSON
Buffy McQuillen
Yokayo Pomo, Yuki,
Nomlaki

SECRETARY
Sara Dutschke
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Laurena Bolden
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Reid Milanovich
Cahuilla

COMMISSIONER
Vacant

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Raymond C. Hitchcock
Miwok, Nisenan

NAHC HEADQUARTERS
1550 Harbor Boulevard
Suite 100
West Sacramento,
California 95691
(916) 373-3710
nahc@nahc.ca.gov
NAHC.ca.gov

Re: 2023110034, Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update Project, Ventura, Kern, and Los Angeles Counties

Dear Ms. Metraux:

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) has received the Notice of Preparation (NOP), Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) or Early Consultation for the project referenced above. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code §21000 et seq.), specifically Public Resources Code §21084.1, states that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code § 21084.1; Cal. Code Regs., tit.14, § 15064.5 (b) (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5 (b)). If there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before a lead agency, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) shall be prepared. (Pub. Resources Code §21080 (d); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 5064 subd.(a)(1) (CEQA Guidelines § 15064 (a)(1)). In order to determine whether a project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, a lead agency will need to determine whether there are historical resources within the area of potential effect (APE).

CEQA was amended significantly in 2014. Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) (AB 52) amended CEQA to create a separate category of cultural resources, "tribal cultural resources" (Pub. Resources Code §21074) and provides that a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.2). Public agencies shall, when feasible, avoid damaging effects to any tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.3 (a)). **AB 52 applies to any project for which a notice of preparation, a notice of negative declaration, or a mitigated negative declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2015.** If your project involves the adoption of or amendment to a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation or proposed designation of open space, on or after March 1, 2005, it may also be subject to Senate Bill 18 (Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004) (SB 18). **Both SB 18 and AB 52 have tribal consultation requirements.** If your project is also subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) (NEPA), the tribal consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (154 U.S.C. 300101, 36 C.F.R. §800 et seq.) may also apply.

The NAHC recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of your proposed project as early as possible in order to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and best protect tribal cultural resources. Below is a brief summary of portions of AB 52 and SB 18 as well as the NAHC's recommendations for conducting cultural resources assessments.

Consult your legal counsel about compliance with AB 52 and SB 18 as well as compliance with any other applicable laws.

AB 52

AB 52 has added to CEQA the additional requirements listed below, along with many other requirements:

1. Fourteen Day Period to Provide Notice of Completion of an Application/Decision to Undertake a Project: Within fourteen (14) days of determining that an application for a project is complete or of a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, a lead agency shall provide formal notification to a designated contact of, or tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice, to be accomplished by at least one written notice that includes:
 - a. A brief description of the project.
 - b. The lead agency contact information.
 - c. Notification that the California Native American tribe has 30 days to request consultation. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d)).
 - d. A "California Native American tribe" is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of Statutes of 2004 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21073).

2. Begin Consultation Within 30 Days of Receiving a Tribe's Request for Consultation and Before Releasing a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report: A lead agency shall begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving a request for consultation from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1, subds. (d) and (e)) and prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration or Environmental Impact Report. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (b)).
 - a. For purposes of AB 52, "consultation shall have the same meaning as provided in Gov. Code §65352.4 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (b)).

3. Mandatory Topics of Consultation If Requested by a Tribe: The following topics of consultation, if a tribe requests to discuss them, are mandatory topics of consultation:
 - a. Alternatives to the project.
 - b. Recommended mitigation measures.
 - c. Significant effects. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).

4. Discretionary Topics of Consultation: The following topics are discretionary topics of consultation:
 - a. Type of environmental review necessary.
 - b. Significance of the tribal cultural resources.
 - c. Significance of the project's impacts on tribal cultural resources.
 - d. If necessary, project alternatives or appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation that the tribe may recommend to the lead agency. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).

5. Confidentiality of Information Submitted by a Tribe During the Environmental Review Process: With some exceptions, any information, including but not limited to, the location, description, and use of tribal cultural resources submitted by a California Native American tribe during the environmental review process shall not be included in the environmental document or otherwise disclosed by the lead agency or any other public agency to the public, consistent with Government Code §6254 (r) and §6254.10. Any information submitted by a California Native American tribe during the consultation or environmental review process shall be published in a confidential appendix to the environmental document unless the tribe that provided the information consents, in writing, to the disclosure of some or all of the information to the public. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (c)(1)).

6. Discussion of Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources in the Environmental Document: If a project may have a significant impact on a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency's environmental document shall discuss both of the following:
 - a. Whether the proposed project has a significant impact on an identified tribal cultural resource.
 - b. Whether feasible alternatives or mitigation measures, including those measures that may be agreed to pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (a), avoid or substantially lessen the impact on the identified tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (b)).

- 7. Conclusion of Consultation:** Consultation with a tribe shall be considered concluded when either of the following occurs:
- a.** The parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a tribal cultural resource; or
 - b.** A party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (b)).
- 8. Recommending Mitigation Measures Agreed Upon in Consultation in the Environmental Document:** Any mitigation measures agreed upon in the consultation conducted pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2 shall be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and in an adopted mitigation monitoring and reporting program, if determined to avoid or lessen the impact pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (b), paragraph 2, and shall be fully enforceable. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (a)).
- 9. Required Consideration of Feasible Mitigation:** If mitigation measures recommended by the staff of the lead agency as a result of the consultation process are not included in the environmental document or if there are no agreed upon mitigation measures at the conclusion of consultation, or if consultation does not occur, and if substantial evidence demonstrates that a project will cause a significant effect to a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency shall consider feasible mitigation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21084.3 (b). (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (e)).
- 10. Examples of Mitigation Measures That, If Feasible, May Be Considered to Avoid or Minimize Significant Adverse Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources:**
- a.** Avoidance and preservation of the resources in place, including, but not limited to:
 - i.** Planning and construction to avoid the resources and protect the cultural and natural context.
 - ii.** Planning greenspace, parks, or other open space, to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria.
 - b.** Treating the resource with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the tribal cultural values and meaning of the resource, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - i.** Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resource.
 - ii.** Protecting the traditional use of the resource.
 - iii.** Protecting the confidentiality of the resource.
 - c.** Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property, with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or utilizing the resources or places.
 - d.** Protecting the resource. (Pub. Resource Code §21084.3 (b)).
 - e.** Please note that a federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC to protect a California prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place may acquire and hold conservation easements if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed. (Civ. Code §815.3 (c)).
 - f.** Please note that it is the policy of the state that Native American remains and associated grave artifacts shall be repatriated. (Pub. Resources Code §5097.991).
- 11. Prerequisites for Certifying an Environmental Impact Report or Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration with a Significant Impact on an Identified Tribal Cultural Resource:** An Environmental Impact Report may not be certified, nor may a mitigated negative declaration or a negative declaration be adopted unless one of the following occurs:
- a.** The consultation process between the tribes and the lead agency has occurred as provided in Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 and §21080.3.2 and concluded pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2.
 - b.** The tribe that requested consultation failed to provide comments to the lead agency or otherwise failed to engage in the consultation process.
 - c.** The lead agency provided notice of the project to the tribe in compliance with Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d) and the tribe failed to request consultation within 30 days. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (d)).

The NAHC's PowerPoint presentation titled, "Tribal Consultation Under AB 52: Requirements and Best Practices" may be found online at: http://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AB52TribalConsultation_CalEPAPDF.pdf

SB 18

SB 18 applies to local governments and requires local governments to contact, provide notice to, refer plans to, and consult with tribes prior to the adoption or amendment of a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation of open space. (Gov. Code §65352.3). Local governments should consult the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's "Tribal Consultation Guidelines," which can be found online at: https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/09_14_05_Updated_Guidelines_922.pdf.

Some of SB 18's provisions include:

1. **Tribal Consultation:** If a local government considers a proposal to adopt or amend a general plan or a specific plan, or to designate open space it is required to contact the appropriate tribes identified by the NAHC by requesting a "Tribal Consultation List." If a tribe, once contacted, requests consultation the local government must consult with the tribe on the plan proposal. **A tribe has 90 days from the date of receipt of notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe.** (Gov. Code §65352.3 (a)(2)).
2. **No Statutory Time Limit on SB 18 Tribal Consultation.** There is no statutory time limit on SB 18 tribal consultation.
3. **Confidentiality:** Consistent with the guidelines developed and adopted by the Office of Planning and Research pursuant to Gov. Code §65040.2, the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of the information concerning the specific identity, location, character, and use of places, features and objects described in Public Resources Code §5097.9 and §5097.993 that are within the city's or county's jurisdiction. (Gov. Code §65352.3 (b)).
4. **Conclusion of SB 18 Tribal Consultation:** Consultation should be concluded at the point in which:
 - a. The parties to the consultation come to a mutual agreement concerning the appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation; or
 - b. Either the local government or the tribe, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached concerning the appropriate measures of preservation or mitigation. (Tribal Consultation Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2005) at p. 18).

Agencies should be aware that neither AB 52 nor SB 18 precludes agencies from initiating tribal consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with their jurisdictions before the timeframes provided in AB 52 and SB 18. For that reason, we urge you to continue to request Native American Tribal Contact Lists and "Sacred Lands File" searches from the NAHC. The request forms can be found online at: <http://nahc.ca.gov/resources/forms/>.

NAHC Recommendations for Cultural Resources Assessments

To adequately assess the existence and significance of tribal cultural resources and plan for avoidance, preservation in place, or barring both, mitigation of project-related impacts to tribal cultural resources, the NAHC recommends the following actions:

1. Contact the appropriate regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) Center (https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30331) for an archaeological records search. The records search will determine:
 - a. If part or all of the APE has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
 - b. If any known cultural resources have already been recorded on or adjacent to the APE.
 - c. If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
 - d. If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
2. If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
 - a. The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum and not be made available for public disclosure.
 - b. The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional CHRIS center.

3. Contact the NAHC for:
 - a. A Sacred Lands File search. Remember that tribes do not always record their sacred sites in the Sacred Lands File, nor are they required to do so. A Sacred Lands File search is not a substitute for consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project's APE.
 - b. A Native American Tribal Consultation List of appropriate tribes for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in planning for avoidance, preservation in place, or, failing both, mitigation measures.

4. Remember that the lack of surface evidence of archaeological resources (including tribal cultural resources) does not preclude their subsurface existence.
 - a. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of inadvertently discovered archaeological resources per Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5(f) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(f)). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American with knowledge of cultural resources should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
 - b. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the disposition of recovered cultural items that are not burial associated in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.
 - c. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the treatment and disposition of inadvertently discovered Native American human remains. Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097.98, and Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5, subdivisions (d) and (e) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5, subds. (d) and (e)) address the processes to be followed in the event of an inadvertent discovery of any Native American human remains and associated grave goods in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my email address:
Cameron.Vela@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Cameron Vela

Cameron Vela
Cultural Resources Analyst

cc: State Clearinghouse

DeBrito, Danny

From: Squarespace <form-submission@squarespace.info>
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 4:35 PM
To: DeBrito, Danny
Subject: Form Submission - Public Scoping Form - Motorcross Track

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Sent via form submission from [Hungry Valley](#)

Name: Chuck Willhite

Email: chuck.willhite@gmail.com, accepts marketing: false

Subject: Motorcross Track

Message: It seems that the MX track has been forgotten. When will it be ready for use and please groom/water the smaller track that is connected so beginners can learn to ride.

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COUNTY of VENTURA

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
CHARLES R. GENKEL
Environmental Health Director

November 20, 2023

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 92496
ATTN: Katie Metraux

Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update (RMA REF 23-019)

Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division) staff reviewed the information submitted for the subject project.

The Division provided the following comments:

1. The proposed project includes an existing permanent concession stand located in the Ventura County area of the project site. Food facilities are subject to plan review and permitting by this Division. The applicant/ food facility operator must submit plans to the Ventura County Environmental Health Division, Community Services Section and obtain plan approval prior to beginning any retail food operations.

<https://vcrma.org/en/consumer-food-protection>

If you have any questions, please contact me at (805) 654-2830 or Roxy.Cabral@ventura.org.

Roxy Cabral, R.E.H.S.
Land Use Section
Environmental Health Division

JW G:\Admin\TECH SERVICES\FINALED Letters\Land Use\SR0021448- ODR RMA REF 23-019 Hungry Vly SVRA 11 20 23.docx

HALL OF ADMINISTRATION #1730
805-654-2813 • FAX 805-654-2480 • 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • vcrma.org

DeBrito, Danny

From: Squarespace <form-submission@squarespace.info>
Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 11:22 AM
To: DeBrito, Danny
Subject: Form Submission - Public Scoping Form - Hungry Valley Plan Update

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Sent via form submission from [Hungry Valley](#)

Name: David Hess

Email: dmhess88@yahoo.com, accepts marketing: false

Subject: Hungry Valley Plan Update

Message: November 24, 2023

To: Katie Metraux, Project Manager
 PO Box 942896
 Sacramento, CA 92496

Re: Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update & Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms. Metraux:

I am writing to comment on the Hungry Valley SVRA (HV) General Plan Update (HVGPU) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). My family and I have enjoyed the SVRAs at Hungry Valley, Ocotillo Wells and Hollister Hills and plan to visit them in the future. Therefore I am interested in ensuring that management policies and actions at HV serve to maximize access and improve the user experience for not only myself, but all others who enjoy these unique motorized vehicle recreation area.

After reviewing the Final Preferred Alternative, I support moving forward with implementation of the elements of the GPU as they serve to improve public access and the user experience in a variety of valuable ways.

Currently there is a system for allowing street-legal vehicles to pass through the SVRA en route to areas of the Los Padres National Forest (Alamo Mountain) without paying the entrance fee. I urge you to continue this policy.

I am concerned about the costs (not specified in the GPU) for the electrical vehicle charging stations. I urge you to position these stations within the SVRA rather than at the entrance stations, to avoid their use by the general public using the I-5 corridor. In addition, the installation of these stations should be staged, starting small and increasing their number as demand increases.

I would also urge you to incorporate as much technology as possible, such as unmanned computerized fee paying stations, remotely controlled gates and other technology so that long-term costs for the management of the SVRA can be minimized.

In closing, it is important to note that the GPU has the opportunity to improve public access and the user experience for everyone who enjoys recreating at Hungry Valley, and to reduce potential for user conflict and preservation of natural and cultural resources. The suggestions I have shared are made with the thought of all current and future users in mind.

Thank you for the opportunity to share public comment on this important project.

Yours truly,

David M. Hess

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**Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District**

4567 Telephone Rd
Ventura, California 93003

tel 805/303-4005
fax 805/456-7797
www.vcapcd.org

**Ali Reza Ghasemi, PE
Air Pollution Control Officer**

**VENTURA COUNTY
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT**
Memorandum

TO: Katie Metraux, Project Manager **DATE:** November 28, 2023

FROM: Nicole Collazo, Air Quality Specialist, VCAPCD Planning Division *NC*

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan Update Project (RMA 23-019)

Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) staff has reviewed the subject Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the draft environmental impact report (DEIR), which will analyze the environmental impacts of a proposed general plan update to the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area, (SVRA) which would include modifying allowable off-highway vehicle recreation boundaries in select areas. A portion of the SVRA lies in the northeastern boundary of Ventura County in the Los Padres National Forest. The Lead Agency is the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

APCD has the following comments regarding the project's NOP.

NOP Comments

1) The air quality assessment should consider project consistency, as included in the Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines, with the recently adopted 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The 2022 AQMP is the air plan to attain the 2015 federal 8-hr ozone standard with updated emission factors and population forecasts. The 2016 AQMP was the plan to attain the 2008 federal ozone standard; that standard has been met. More information on the 2022 AQMP can be found here <http://www.vcapcd.org/AQMP-2022.htm>.

2) The Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines (AQAG) can also be used to evaluate all potential air quality impacts. The AQAG are also downloadable from our website here: <http://www.vcapcd.org/environmental-review.htm>. Specifically, the air quality assessment should consider reactive organic compound (ROC) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from all project-related motor vehicles for all proposed uses, energy emissions such as heating, lighting and electricity, and area emissions such as landscaping equipment and maintenance. We note that the AQAG has not been updated since 2003 and the recommended list of mitigation measures in the AQAG are also limited and outdated. Current air quality determinations follow the same methodology but using different tools (CalEEMod vs. URBEMIS, updated OEHHA standards health risk assessments). Construction emission reduction measures, including for construction required or needed for projects related to vegetation and sediment removal, such as requiring Tier 4 off-road construction equipment can reduce pollutants by up to 85% and is highly recommended if emissions are above local and state thresholds adopted. This mitigation can also be quantified using the CalEEMod air emissions model. Another reduction measure is using 2010 and newer

on-road engine vehicles for exporting material that comply with California State Regulation for In-Use On-Road Diesel Vehicles Title 13, CCR §2025 since they emit less diesel emissions.

3) The air quality impact section should be in accordance with the state CEQA Guidelines impact criteria found in its Appendix G, Environmental Checklist Form, outlined below.

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality management plan.
- Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.
- 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 that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).
- Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) affecting a substantial number of people.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NOP. If you have any questions, you may contact me at nicole@vcapcd.org.



1500 W El Camino Ave. #352 · Sacramento · California · 95833-1945
 Phone · 916-710-1950 · info@corva.org · www.corva.org

November 28, 2023

Katie Metraux, Project Manager
 P.O. Box 9424896
 Sacramento, CA 92496

Submitted via email: info@planhungryvalley.com

Thank you for accepting these comments on behalf of the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), our members, member clubs and business sponsors. For over 53 years CORVA has been dedicated to preserving, promoting and protecting vehicular access to state parks, in addition to advocating for off-road trails and areas on federal land throughout California.

Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (HVSVRA) provides access to a wide variety of off-road enthusiasts because of its proximity to large urban areas in southern California. The proposed General Plan must be diverse enough to meet current needs and foresee the needs for future generations of off-road enthusiasts.

To that end, the scoping document is proposing a few changes that at first glance seem untoward for a planning document for a State Vehicular Recreation Area. Concerning the proposed electric charging stations, it is unclear how the stations in areas close to the Interstate 5 corridor would benefit OHV recreation enthusiasts. Electric vehicles do not contribute to the OHV Trust Fund through the gas tax, a percentage of which provides the largest source of income to the fund. Additionally, electric off-road vehicle registrations are very few in number, and do not represent a significant contribution to the OHV Trust Fund. Please clearly state in the draft General Plan how the charging stations would be operated, who would finance the construction and ongoing maintenance, and if any of the fees generated from the charging stations would be funneled back into the maintenance and operations of the park.

The charging station proposed near the Smith Forks Campground might be better situated closer to Edison Canyon Campground and the proposed kids track. Because of the wide availability of Stacyc electric bikes, one of the most prolific users of electric off-road vehicles are children who are learning how to ride. It would be present a greater benefit to the small population of electric off-road vehicle users if the electric charging station was located closer to the proposed kids track.

The greater question concerns the appropriateness of using OHV Trust Fund monies for the construction and/or operation of an electric charging station. The costs for construction,

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maintenance and operation of the charging station should be borne by an outside concession, and not take away any staff time that is funded by the OHV Trust Fund.

Equally concerning is the proposed RV park in the Condor Mesa area. State Parks successfully operate RV campgrounds throughout the state with full hook-ups, but this is a proposal for a State Vehicular Recreation Area. All aspects of the park must enhance OHV recreation and benefit off-road enthusiasts. A disturbing scenario could be that the RV park is built with OHV Trust Fund dollars, but becomes largely reserved by non-OHV enthusiasts, thereby defeating the purpose of benefitting the community that funded the construction. Please delineate in the draft General Plan whether the proposed RV park would be operated by an outside concessionaire, or by State Parks, and how OHV enthusiasts could ensure the availability of spaces for their use alone.

There are several changes proposed for the Quail Canyon Special Event Area, but Quail Canyon has been closed for public use for a long time, with no scheduled reopening. The draft General Plan should address the well repairs needed for the area and give a schedule for reopening to the public before any additional improvements are seriously considered.

Additionally, the proposed unmanned aerial vehicle area within Qual Canyon Special Event Area is a confusing addition to the General Plan. This proposal will not enhance OHV recreation or create new opportunities for off-road enthusiasts, which goes against the mission statement for the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of California State Parks. It would be an inappropriate use of OHV Trust Fund money, although if funds could be apportioned from another source, it could be considered an additional use of the park *only when the area isn't needed by the intended users, the OHV community.*

There are several worthwhile proposals in the preferred alternative. The new staging area proposed near Smith Fork Campground is a good proposal and would meet the needs for additional parking and unloading due to the rise in popularity of UTV or SideXSide vehicles. The new proposed entrance from Frazier Mountain Road would be very helpful to off-road enthusiasts that use the trail connections into the Los Padres National Forest.

One overall concern that must be considered in the draft General Plan is the expectations of visitors to the SVRA and how the park is meeting those expectations. In the past few years, some of the roads available to street legal 4WD recreation have been closed, negatively affecting the experience of that group of off-roaders. Similarly, the proliferation of UTV's in the park has negatively affected technical single-track riders. Hungry Valley must work with local clubs and communities of visitors to the park to enhance their experiences because of the inherent diversity of the off-road community. Outreach and the creation of quarterly meetings with the public will help staff identify and satisfy these needs.

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The preferred alternative for the Hungry Valley General Plan has some out-of-the-box ideas and shows some creativity in trying to meet the needs of current and future generations of off-roaders. However, some of the uses may not be appropriate expenditures from the OHV Trust Fund, and the draft document must identify alternative funding sources for these uses.

CORVA looks forward to working closely with the planning team in the development of the draft Hungry Valley General Plan.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the California Off-Road Vehicle Association,

Amy Granat
Managing Director
Amy.granat@corva.org

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SC Wildlands
Science & Collaboration for Connected Wildlands
P.O. Box 1052, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
www.scwildlands.org

December 1, 2023

Katie Metraux, Project Manager
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 92496
Email: info@PlanHungryValley.com

**SUBJECT: Response to Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact
Report for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area
General Plan Update**

Dear Ms. Metraux,

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update for Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). SC Wildlands' mission is to protect and restore systems of connected wildlands that support native species and the ecosystems upon which they rely. As such, our comments largely focus on the potential impacts of the proposed project on habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors and the need to ensure that wildlife movement is maintained and enhanced within the context of the proposed actions.

Hungry Valley sits at the southern extent of the Tehachapi Connection (Penrod et al. 2003) and also overlaps the Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage (Penrod et al. 2005). Areas important for wildlife movement should have a sensitive area designation to ensure that any new facilities are sited outside of high-quality habitats and areas important for wildlife movement. Please consider adopting any applicable Ventura County Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor (HCWC) ordinances (e.g., lighting, fencing, setbacks for crossings), so that all new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities are consistent with or more restrictive than what's in the HCWC. All proposed actions for Hungry Valley SVRA and the associated cumulative impacts should consider the context of these regionally significant landscape level connections, including the extensive existing conservation investments and policies that have been put in place specifically to conserve connectivity.

The Tehachapi Connection (Penrod et al. 2003), linking the Sierra Nevada and Sierra Madre mountains, has statewide importance as the sole wildland connection between the Sierra Nevada-Cascade system that stretches for over 2000 miles from Kern County into British Columbia, and the 800 mile long upland system comprised of the Sierra Madre (the coast ranges from San Francisco to Los Angeles), Transverse (Santa Monica, San Gabriel, San Bernardino Mountains), and Peninsular Ranges (San Jacinto, Santa Ana, Palomar, and Laguna Mountains of San Diego County, and the Sierra Juarez of Baja). This linkage is also situated at

the juncture of several ecoregions, including the Sierra Nevada, South Coast, Central Valley, and the Mojave Desert. The Tehachapi Mountains have been described as a “biogeographic crossroads” and a “crucible of evolution”, and are home to a stunning variety of plant and animal life (White et al. 2003). The recent state-wide mountain lion genetic study (Gustafson et al. 2022) identifies the Tehachapi Mountains as part of the Sierra population segment, which is the most genetically diverse and a critically important and valuable source population for restoring genetic diversity to lion populations in the Transverse Ranges to the south and west (and beyond).

The Tehachapi Connection connects extensive protected lands in the region. Protected areas to the south include Los Padres National Forest, Wind Wolves Preserve, Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and **Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area**. Protected areas to the north include Sequoia National Forest and extensive lands administered by Bureau of Land Management. At the time the linkage report was completed in 2003 (Penrod et al.), about 12% (78,355 of 663,257 total acres) of the linkage design was protected, mostly in land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Since that time, an additional 25,213 acres have been protected in fee (CPAD 2021b) and 118,103 acres has been protected under conservation easements (CCED 2021b) with an additional 89,281 acres committed for conservation in future Tejon Ranch set asides (TRC et al. 2008), such that 310,952 acres or 47% of the Linkage Design is now protected, conserved, or committed to conservation. An additional 119,655 acres in the linkage are conserved as working rangelands through the Land Conservation Act (i.e., Williamson Act), such that 65% of the linkage (430,607 out of 663,257 acres) is protected or conserved, providing contiguous protected lands stretching over 55 miles through the Tehachapi Linkage, connecting Sequoia and Los Padres National Forests and Hungry Valley SRVA.

The Tehachapi Connection overlaps or has been integrated into several federal, state, and local policies that support conservation in the linkage. The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP; BLM 2016) includes several federal land conservation designations within the linkage and beyond to conserve connectivity. For example, the DRECP includes the Tehachapi Linkage Wildlife Allocation area, one of only two such Wildlife Allocation areas in the plan, which overlaps 41,629 acres of the linkage but the total area is 161,646 acres (BLM 2016), expanding the linkage to encompass virtually all habitat north of State Route 58 in between the major strands of the delineated linkage design (Penrod et al. 2003) all the way to Sequoia National Forest! The DRECP (BLM 2016) also includes the Pacific Crest Trail Special Resource Management Area that overlaps 21,399 acres in the eastern strand of the linkage. The DRECP also includes several Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that overlap and expand beyond the linkage, including Middle Knob ACEC (18,147 of 20,533 acres in the linkage); Horse Canyon ACEC (2,842 of 6,892 acres in the linkage); and the Jawbone Butterbrecht ACEC (2,911 of 190,513 in the linkage), which is contiguous with the 247,787-acre Mojave Ground Squirrel ACEC (BLM 2016). In addition, the Los Angeles County San Andreas Significant Ecological Area (2019) overlaps 6,988 acres in the southwest area of the linkage, which is contiguous with Hungry Valley SVRA.

The Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage serves to connect the Sierra Madre Ranges of Los Padres National Forest with the Castaic Ranges of the Angeles National Forest (Penrod et al. 2005a). The linkage encompasses a diversity of natural communities and has several main branches, reflecting variation in the habitat needs of different target focal species. The northern branch, which overlaps Hungry Valley SVRA, is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodland, sagebrush, and desert scrub habitats. The recent California mountain lion genetics study (Gustafson et al. 2022) indicates that this is an important connectivity area between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Coast and Transverse Ranges.

The Sierra Madre-Castaic Connection connects extensive protected lands in the region. Protected areas to the west include Los Padres National Forest and **Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area**, and further north Wind Wolves Preserve, Carrizo Plain National Monument, and Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Protected areas to the east include Angeles National Forest and Castaic Lake State Recreation Area. At the time the Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage report was released in 2005a (Penrod et al.), roughly 75% of the linkage (299,208 of 398,944 acres) was conserved. Since that time, an additional 4,331 acres have been protected or conserved via fee title or conservation easements. In addition, 18,538 acres in the southern branch of the linkage is conserved as working rangelands through the Land Conservation Act in Ventura County, such that 81% of the linkage is now protected or conserved.

The Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage also overlaps or has been integrated into several federal, state, and local policies that support conservation in the linkage. Federal land conservation designations in the linkage include Sespe Wilderness, Chumash Wilderness, Dick Smith Wilderness, and Matilija Wilderness, as well as Piru Creek and Sespe Creek National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Roughly 18,596 acres of the linkage is included in Los Angeles County's Significant Ecological Areas ordinance. In addition, 56,206 acres of the southern branch of the linkage is included in Ventura County's Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor (HCWC) Overlay Zone (2019) and associated ordinances (e.g., nighttime lighting, fencing, wildlife crossing structures, surface waters). The County of Ventura also administers contracts for 18,538 acres of rangelands on several ranches in the southern branch of the linkage that are enrolled in the California Land Conservation Act (LCA) Program (i.e., Williamson Act), which are contracts between the County and qualifying landowners that restricts land use to agricultural or open space uses; contracts automatically renew annually. The City of Ojai's General Plan 2045 Update section on Biological Resources, Natural Resources, and Open Space Existing Conditions Report (2021) refers to the County of Ventura's HCWC. The linkage also includes 208,746 acres of designated critical habitat for California condor, southwestern willow flycatcher, conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, California red-legged frog and the arroyo toad.

Hungry Valley SVRA abuts a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Wildlife Barrier (2022) on Interstate 5. There are several existing bridges on I-5, as well as Caltrans Adaptation priorities and planned transportation improvement projects in the vicinity of Hungry Valley SVRA, including a project for Tejon Pass Overcrossing Bridge Seismic Retro. These transportation improvement projects may provide opportunities for wildlife crossing improvements. For example, there is a 3-mile stretch of Interstate 5 south of the village of Gorman and north of the interchange with SR138 (PM 82.08 to PM 84.9 Los Angeles County), where improved crossings are needed (Penrod et al. 2003). Four concrete box culverts about 5 feet tall and wide are spaced one-half to 1 mile apart, and suggest locations for bridged undercrossings. Each culvert opens directly into Hungry Valley State Park on the west end of the culvert, and the eastern freeway frontage by the Michener Conservation Easement administered by Tejon Ranch Conservancy (TRC). In addition, Gorman Post Ranch (private inholding currently for sale) is



Culvert on Interstate-5 for Gorman Creek with Hungry Valley State Park in the foreground. Note steep degraded slopes on far side of I-5.

contiguous with the future TRC dedication. Either a bridged undercrossing or a vegetated wildlife overpass may be feasible here.

All proposed actions should consider opportunities for wildlife crossing improvements on Interstate 5 and impacts of the proposed actions to wildlife movement at the regional scale. All proposed circulation improvements and permanent erosion control measures associated with transportation infrastructure in the park should incorporate climate resilient wildlife crossing structures that address the needs of multiple taxonomic groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please contact us if we can provide further input on the importance of Hungry Valley SVRA to regional wildlife movement. We're happy to provide data and information to the environmental review process.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristeen Penrod, Director
SC Wildlands
www.scwildlands.org



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December 1, 2023

Katie Metraux, Project Manager
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 92496

Re: Scoping Comments on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan

Dear Project Manager Metraux:

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (HVSVRA) General Plan update. Our organization works to protect the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF), which is adjacent to the HVSVRA and is likely to be impacted in various ways by the an update to the General Plan.

We appreciate the steps the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) has taken prior to preparation of an EIR. However, the NOP is relatively lacking in detail, and therefore our scoping comments may not reflect the full suite of issues in which we are interested as they relate to the General Plan update. We anticipate highlighting any additional concerns we may have once the draft EIR is published. At this point in time, our primary concerns relate to 1) how State Parks plans to formalize trail connections with existing designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes in the LPNF and 2) how the HVSVRA will be managed in consideration of wildlife movement and habitat connectivity.

1. Trail Connections to the LPNF

The NOP states that “[t]rail connections are proposed to be formalized from Sterling Canyon Trail to East Frazier and Tejon Trails (C2 and C3, respectively), to

improve connectivity between Hungry Valley SVRA and Los Padres National Forest.” The East Frazier OHV trail (Forest Route 19W06) and Tejon OHV trail (Forest Route 19W03) are both seasonally closed trails that, when open, only allow motorcycle use. We understand that these trails connect with the Sterling Canyon Trail in the HVSVRA, and satellite imagery of the area indicates that the connections are currently fenced off between the two pieces of public land.

If State Parks intends to formalize these connections and remove the existing barriers between the LPNF and the HVSVRA, we request that your agency cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service and ensure that any changes made to the General Plan do not increase the likelihood of unauthorized use of designated LPNF routes or trespass off designated routes. Specifically, both East Fraizer OHV and Tejon OHV are only open to motorcycles between May 1 and November 1 and are closed to other types of OHVs at all times (see the Motor Vehicle Use Map for the Mt. Pinos, Ojai, and Santa Barbara Ranger Districts of the LPNF in Exhibit A). Conversely, the connecting route in the HVSVRA (Sterling Canyon Trail) is open to other types of OHVs in addition to motorcycles, though it is unclear to us whether there are any seasonal restrictions on use within the HVSVRA. Therefore, it is imperative, if these connections are to be formalized, that State Parks ensure that restrictions are implemented that mirror those of the LPNF trails. This may require installation of gates that are only opened seasonally, as well as barriers that restrict non-motorcycle use. The draft EIR should contain a detailed analysis of how these connections will be managed and whether State Parks has the capacity to properly manage seasonal cross-boundary access in these locations.

2. Wildlife Movement and Habitat Connectivity

The HVSVRA is located in an ecologically important area yet is home to some of the most high-impact outdoor recreational uses anywhere in the region. Thus, State Parks has the complicated task of balancing OHV use with wildlife protection in this critical area. The report, *South Coast Missing Linkages: A Wildland Network for the South Coast Ecoregion*, which was developed in partnership with State Parks and several other agencies and nonprofits, identifies much of the HVSVRA as located within the Sierra Madre – Castaic Connection. This wildlife movement and habitat connectivity corridor is important for animal passage between the portions of the Transverse Ranges east of Interstate 5 with those found west of Interstate 5. The HVSVRA is in a unique area where several ecosystems such as mixed chaparral, sage scrub, oak woodland, and pinyon-juniper merge and blend into one another. Such ecotones tend to be biodiverse and provide important habitat for a variety of species.

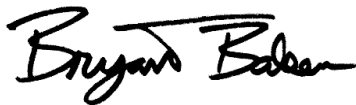
We recommend that State Parks update the General Plan in a way that better facilitates wildlife movement across the HVSVRA and reduces impacts of OHV use on wildlife where possible. One way to achieve this is to follow the approach taken by the County of Ventura, which in 2019 adopted ordinances aimed at better protecting these wildlife corridors. We recommend incorporating into the new General Plan the same requirements for lighting, fencing, facility siting, and protection of existing wildlife crossings (such as culverts) found in these ordinances (see Sec. 8109-4.8 – Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors Overlay Zone in the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance). We urge State Parks to coordinate and consult with the County of Ventura Resource Management Agency during the development of the draft EIR.

Additionally, the draft EIR should contained detailed analyses of how any management actions will impact plants and wildlife in the HVSVRA. While these analyses should center on rare and listed species, more general examinations of how plants and wildlife will be impacted under a new General Plan are also important. The NOP stated that the current General Plan was adopted in 1981, which we note has several mentions of various monitoring plans and management studies. It is unclear whether these studies and plans were develop, since the General Plan was adopted as there is limited information available to the public via State Parks websites. The draft EIR should include any such documents as well as candid analyses on whether and how these plans or studies were actually implemented. Going forward, it is important that State Parks not develop a new General Plan which cannot be properly implemented over the coming years and decades due to staff and funding shortages. This is especially true as it relates to wildlife and ecosystem management. Significant changes to how OHV use occurs within the HVSVRA should not be put forth in the new General Plan with the assumption that certain wildlife and ecosystem management actions will be taken if there is a low likelihood that those management actions will actually be taken.

Thank you for considering our scoping comments. Please send us all future documents related to this project, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss any of the above issues in further detail.

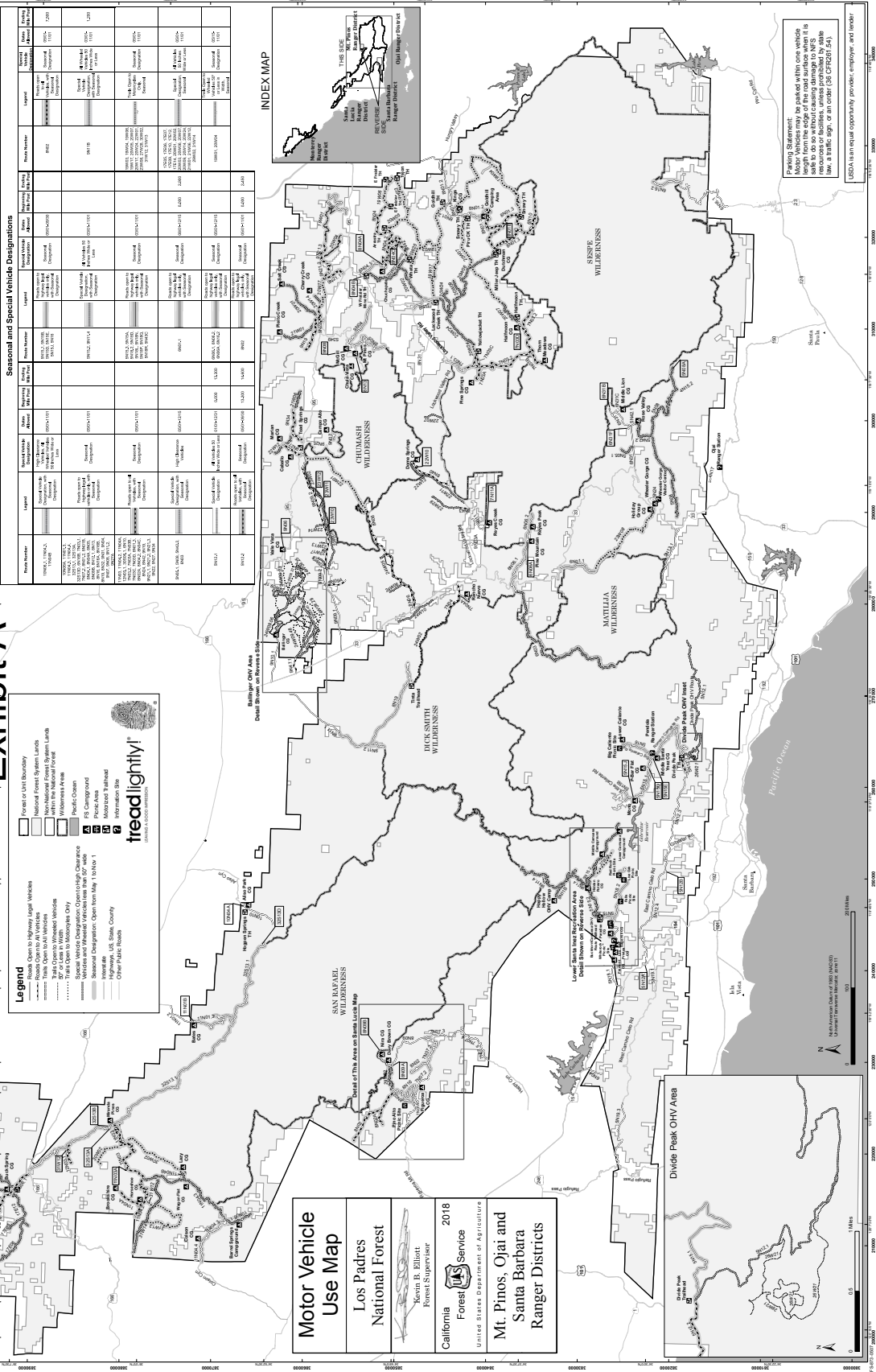
Sincerely,

Bryant Baker, M.S.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryant Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director of Conservation & Research
Los Padres ForestWatch

Exhibit A





COUNTY of VENTURA

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
DAVE WARD
Planning Director

SUSAN CURTIS
Assistant Planning Director

December 4, 2023

Katie Metraux, Project Manager
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 92496

**SUBJECT: Response to Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report
for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan
Update**

Dear Katie Metraux,

Thank you for providing the Ventura County Planning Division (Planning Division) with the opportunity to comment regarding the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update for Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). The Planning Division coordinates with neighboring jurisdictions and provides review and comment on environmental documents prepared for projects that could affect the unincorporated area. The SVRA is an important recreational resource managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), providing campgrounds, trails, and opportunities for visitors to enjoy open space. The Planning Division is supportive of the proposed General Plan update, expanded facility improvements, trail upgrades, and appreciates the protection of important habitat areas.

The proposed project is an environmental review for an update to the General Plan, which establishes the long-range purpose and vision for Hungry Valley SVRA while modifying allowable off-highway vehicles (OHV) recreation boundaries. The General Plan provides a framework to manage impacts from OHV and related uses while maintaining natural, cultural, and physical resources in alignment with the goals and guidelines that would be established in the update. The draft Hungry Valley SVRA Final Preferred Alternative includes a map of land use areas and brief text describing the different characteristics, allowable uses, resources, and related management mandates that include a Distributed Riding Area, Trails Only Area, Native Grasslands Management Area, Quail Canyon Special Event Area, Oak Woodland Natural Preserve, and three cultural preserves.

In addition to expanding the recreational boundaries of the SVRA to include 845 acres of land in the Northwest Condor Mesa area of Kern County, the following improvements are proposed within the General Plan Update (also see map in Exhibit A):

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- **OHV Trails and Access Points¹**

- Proposed NEW Trails and Access Points

- New entry (A3) and trail from Frazier Mountain Road to the new proposed Condor Mesa RV Campground (G3)
 - New trails in the Condor Mesa Area (T1).
 - A New Road Runner Trail (C4*) for connectivity between the main body of Hungry Valley SVRA and the isolated parcel of State Parks land surrounded by Los Padres National Forest.
 - A new maintenance-only connection to the park is proposed from the proposed office buildings at the northern boundary (C5).

- Existing Social Trails or Previously Undesignated Trails

- Incorporate trail connections with USFS lands in Los Padres National Forest west and southwest of Hungry Valley SVRA (near Condor Mesa Area) (T1).
 - A trail connection will be formalized at Stipa Trail (C1), to connect the trails in the main body of Hungry Valley SVRA to the proposed new trails in the Condor Mesa Area.
 - Trail connections are proposed to be formalized from Sterling Canyon Trail to East Frazier and Tejon Trails (C2* and C3*, respectively), to improve connectivity between Hungry Valley SVRA and Los Padres National Forest.

- **Circulation Improvements**

- Repaving Gold Hill Road (R1*) and paving Hungry Valley Road (R2) and Quail Canyon Road (R3), including permanent erosion control measures where necessary.

- **Facilities**

- Upgrades for Existing Facilities

- Existing maintenance and administration buildings (F2) are proposed for upgrades to meet current accessibility and safety standards (occur in existing footprint). Buildings that are not able to be upgraded to meet current standards will be demolished.
 - The current Visitor Center at the North Entrance will be repurposed into a storage facility.

- Proposed New Facilities

- New operational support office buildings would be constructed at the northern boundary adjacent to the Gorman House (F1).
 - A new Visitor Center (V1) is proposed at the Smith Forks Campground.
 - A community event area (E2) is proposed for local, community-oriented or State Parks events in the Condor Mesa Area along Frazier Mountain Park Road.
 - A reservable group campground near the Smith Forks Campground (G2), with restrooms.
 - A new RV campground with full hookups (G3) in the Condor Mesa Area along Frazier Mountain Park Road.

- **Recreation**

- A new designated unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) area (U1) within the Quail Canyon Special Event Area with geofencing to restrict use to designated area.

¹ Items in this list denoted with an asterisk indicate they are located within Ventura County.

- A new kid's track (KT*) near the Edison Canyon Campground.
 - A new skills track (ST*) near the Smith Forks Campground.
 - A new staging area (SA*) near the Smith Forks Campground that includes designated parking area, shade ramadas, and OHV loading/offloading ramps.
- **Amenities**
 - Automatic payment systems at entrance kiosks.
 - Electric vehicle charging stations (EV*).
 - A mobile concession (MC) for seasonal use and/or special events within the Quail Canyon Special Event Area. The newly constructed permanent concessions facility near the ATV Campground will remain as is (PC).

General Plan Review

The uncontrolled use of off-road highway vehicles can significantly degrade and destroy native habitats and impact wildlife movement throughout the landscape. The proposed expansion of OHV trails and recreation areas in Hungry Valley can reasonably be foreseen to impact natural resources directly and indirectly within and beyond the SVRA boundaries. California PRC § 5090.02 states that these recreational areas should be provided and managed for sustained long term use. Accordingly, the EIR should include analysis of the draft General Plan, technical studies and background reports, alternatives analysis, and cumulative impact analyses.

Currently, the information available on the Hungry Valley SVRA website does not include a draft General Plan for review. The documents available summarize public workshops and fact sheets. There is also a "Final Preferred Alternative" with a map that shows areas for park expansion and improvements along with brief text. There is not enough information about the General Plan to evaluate potentially significant impacts and determine that the park can be expanded and improved without causing significant impacts to the environment while sustaining long term use. The NOP should have been released with a draft General Plan for public review and the General Plan should include the State mandated elements.

More detailed maps and other specific information on the number, length, and exact location of existing trails and facilities will be needed for an EIR baseline. There should also be an assessment of habitat types and geologic hazards (slopes, erosion issues, fire evacuations etc.) within the EIR analysis. For example, the 1981 General Plan refers to numerous monitoring and management studies that are not available on the website (e.g., Native Grasslands Management Plan in response to nearby OHV use) and biological policies (pg. 24-26) that require corrective actions (e.g., revegetation policy) as well as habitats (e.g., riparian area).

The General Plan should include, and the EIR should evaluate, planned changes to the facilities, OHV trails, and roads. The EIR should determine if these changes will require additional State Parks monitoring and management actions for long term use and those actions should be included in the General Plan as a policy or program. The EIR alternatives analysis should determine whether any of the new facilities can be sited outside of high-quality habitats, and if they cannot be sited in areas with fewer impacts, then the impacts should be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.

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Regional Wildlife Corridors

The Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage (South Coast) and the Tehachapi Connection are two of eight regional wildlife corridor linkages used by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for conservation and climate action planning² (see map in Exhibit B). Human disturbance has been well documented to significantly alter wildlife movement^{3,4,5}. The Hungry Valley SVRA as shown in Exhibit B is sited within a critical junction point between the two linkages. Exhibit D shows existing bridges on Interstate 5, as well as Caltrans' adaptation priority projects and planned transportation improvement projects that may provide opportunities for wildlife crossing improvements. These bridges and culverts serve as wildlife crossing structures and should be considered in the EIR's analysis of wildlife movement.

If needed to support wildlife movement and to mitigate impacts from new development the General Plan and EIR should include more "sensitive area" designations and a "Wildlife Movement Corridor Protection Plan" as described in PRC § 5090.43 and § 5090.39 to allow for wildlife to safely move through the SRVA. To identify the most appropriate areas to conserve for wildlife movement, a qualified biologist should evaluate direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to wildlife movement. Then the project should be revised, or adequate mitigation measures should be included for any potentially significant impacts identified. Adequate wildlife movement analysis should include identification of impacts and barriers to species' natural movements needed to sustain populations. All impacts to the movement and migration of vulnerable species should be mitigated to the extent feasible⁶. It is important that designs utilize the latest science-based research on lighting⁷, fencing⁸ and other mitigation measures for all infrastructure improvements^{9,10}. In addition, as mentioned previously, the EIR alternative analysis should demonstrate that the proposed new facilities are sited outside high-quality habitats and areas important for wildlife movement. Please coordinate with Caltrans to plan methods for wildlife to utilize their crossing structures as shown in Exhibit D.

In closing, the Ventura County General Plan is supportive of parks and recreation resources; however, a draft Hungry Valley SVRA General Plan should be available for this EIR scoping process. The EIR should include a cumulative impact analysis of wildlife

² <http://www.scwildlands.org/reports/CaliforniaEssentialHabitatConnectivityProject.pdf> and

California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Connectivity/CEHC>

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-020-01380-1>

⁴ <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.3487>

⁵ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/01/230119093130.htm>

⁶ An example of a CEQA wildlife movement analysis can be found within the [County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines](#) and [Initial Study Biological Assessment Template](#)

⁷ <https://www.science.org/toc/science/380/6650>, <https://www.blm.gov/noc/blm-library/night-sky-and-dark-environments-best-management-practices-artificial-light-night>

⁸ https://azdot.gov/sites/default/files/2019/06/wildlife_funnel_fencing.pdf

⁹ <https://fws.gov/media/reducing-bird-collisions-buildings-and-building-glass-best-practices>

¹⁰ <https://conservationcorridor.org/technical-guides/>

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movement. We appreciate State Park's efforts to update the 1981 General Plan and support park improvements and responsible long-term expansion of the SVRA.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this Notice of Preparation. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Abigail Convery at Abigail.Convery@ventura.org or 805.654.2489.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Ward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "W".

Dave Ward, AICP | Planning Director
County of Ventura, Planning Division

Camarillo Springs GPA 2017-2
August 7, 2023
Page 6 of 7

Exhibit A- Proposed General Plan Update Preferred Alternative

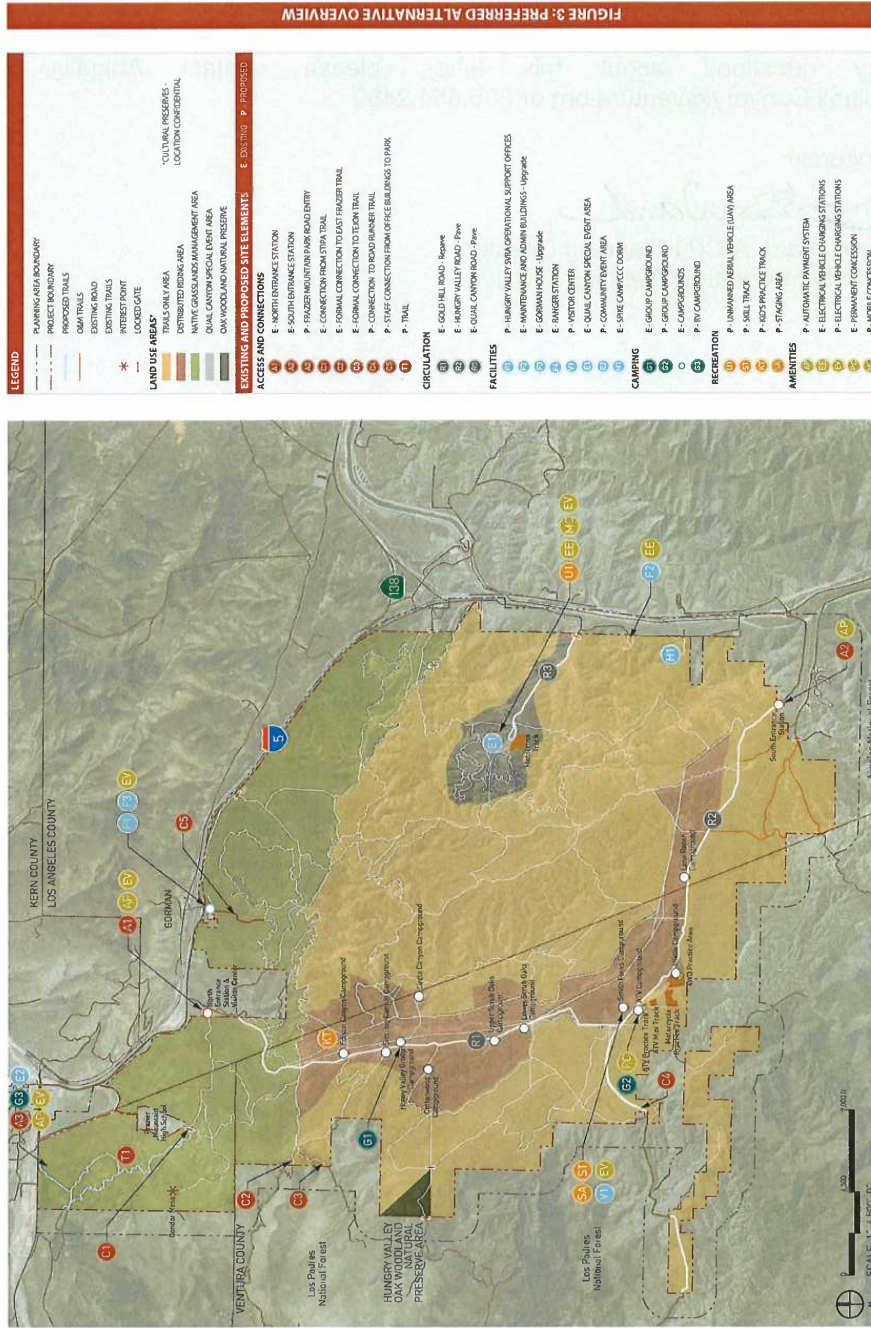
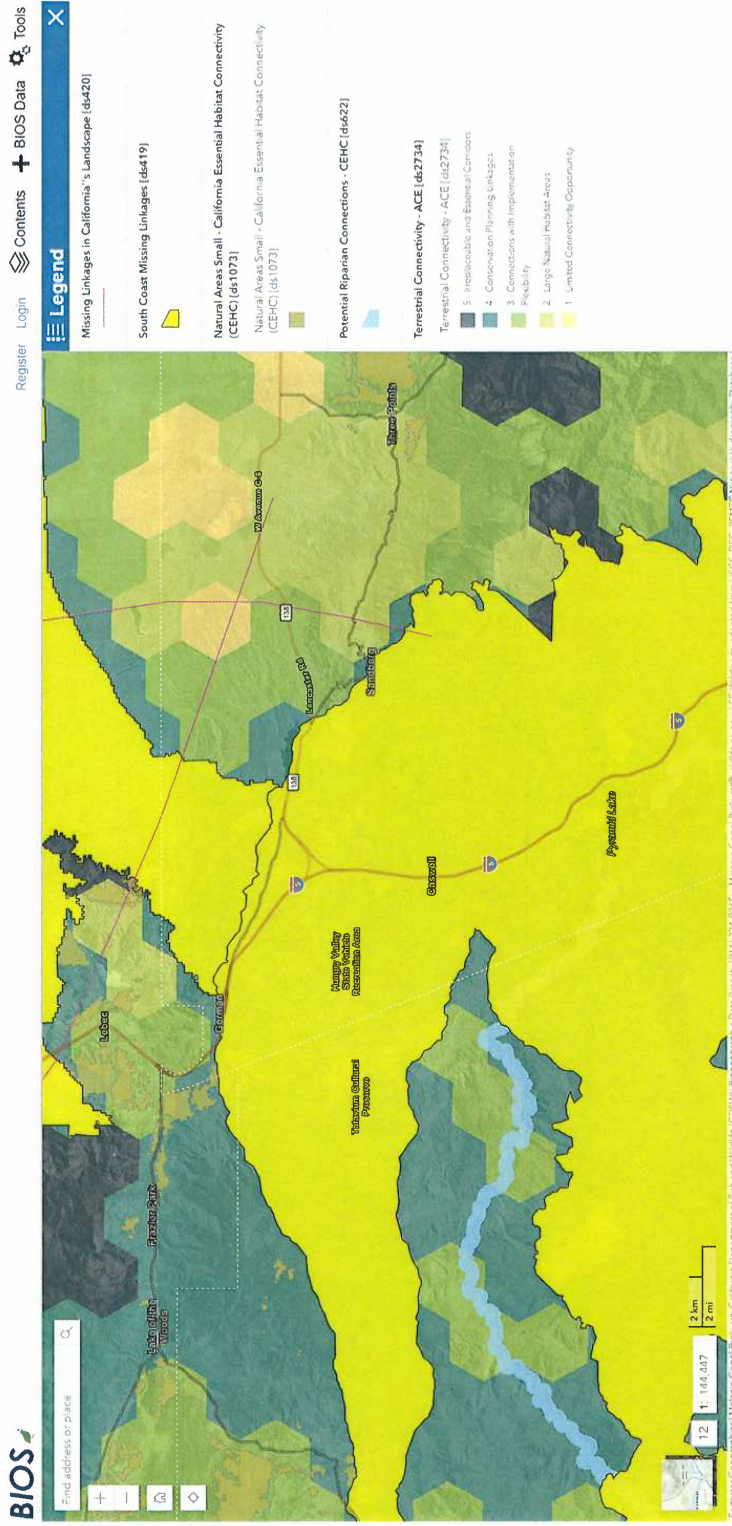


Exhibit B-Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage and Tehachapi Connection (yellow color).

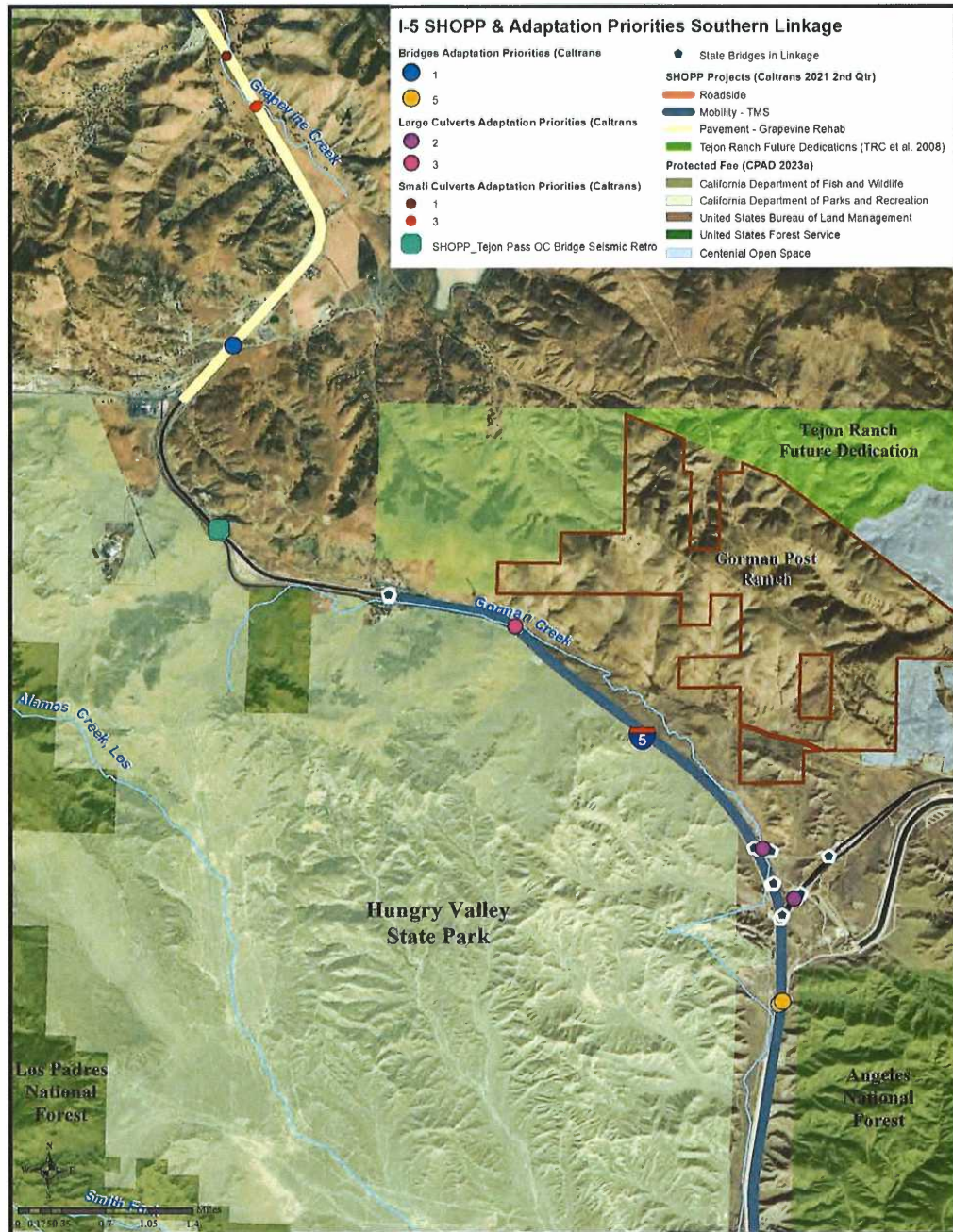


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Exhibit C-Sierra Madre-Castaic Linkage and Tehachapi Connection Terrestrial Connectivity.



Exhibit D-Caltrans I-5 Adaptation Priorities



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California
Department of Conservation
Geologic Energy Management Division

Gavin Newsom, Governor
David Shabazian, Director
 715 P Street, MS 1803
 Sacramento, CA. 95814
 T: (916) 445-5986

12/05/2023

California Department of Parks and Recreation
 Katie Metraux
 Katie.Metraux@parks.ca.gov

Construction Site Well Review (CSWR) ID: 1012926

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 0040230045, 0040250055, 3251005045, 3251027902, 3251027903

Property Owner(s): California Department of Parks and Recreation

Project Location Address: 5301 Ralphs Ranch Rd Gorman, California 93243

Project Title: SCH 2023110034 Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update

Public Resources Code (PRC) § 3208.1 establishes well reabandonment responsibility when a previously plugged and abandoned well will be impacted by planned property development or construction activities. Local permitting agencies, property owners, and/or developers should be aware of, and fully understand, that significant and potentially dangerous issues may be associated with development near oil, gas, and geothermal wells.

The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) has received and reviewed the above referenced project dated 12/5/2023. To assist local permitting agencies, property owners, and developers in making wise land use decisions regarding potential development near oil, gas, or geothermal wells, the Division provides the following well evaluation.

The project is located in Los Angeles County, within the boundaries of the following fields:

Any Field

Our records indicate there are 5 known oil or gas wells located within the project boundary as identified in the application.

- Number of wells Not Abandoned to Current Division Requirements as Prescribed by Law and

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Projected to Be Built Over or Have Future Access Impeded by this project: 0

- Number of wells Not Abandoned to Current Division Requirements as Prescribed by Law and Not Projected to Be Built Over or Have Future Access Impeded by this project: 5
- Number of wells Abandoned to Current Division Requirements as Prescribed by Law and Projected to Be Built Over or Have Future Access Impeded by this project: 0
- Number of wells Abandoned to Current Division Requirements as Prescribed by Law and Not Projected to Be Built Over or Have Future Access Impeded by this project: 0

The Division categorically advises against building over, or in any way impeding access to, oil, gas, or geothermal wells. Impeding access to a well could result in the need to remove any structure or obstacle that prevents or impedes access including, but not limited to, buildings, housing, fencing, landscaping, trees, pools, patios, sidewalks, roadways, and decking. Maintaining sufficient access is considered the ability for a well servicing unit and associated necessary equipment to reach a well from a public street or access way, solely over the parcel on which the well is located. A well servicing unit, and any necessary equipment, should be able to pass unimpeded along and over the route, and should be able to access the well without disturbing the integrity of surrounding infrastructure.

There are no guarantees a well abandoned in compliance with current Division requirements as prescribed by law will not start leaking in the future. It always remains a possibility that any well may start to leak oil, gas, and/or water after abandonment, no matter how thoroughly the well was plugged and abandoned. The Division acknowledges wells plugged and abandoned to the most current Division requirements as prescribed by law have a lower probability of leaking in the future, however there is no guarantees that such abandonments will not leak.

The Division advises that all wells identified on the development parcel prior to, or during, development activities be tested for liquid and gas leakage. Surveyed locations should be provided to the Division in Latitude and Longitude, NAD 83 decimal format. The Division expects any wells found leaking to be reported to it immediately.

Failure to plug and reabandon the well may result in enforcement action, including an order to perform reabandonment well work, pursuant to PRC § 3208.1, and 3224.

PRC § 3208.1 give the Division the authority to order or permit the re-abandonment of any well where it has reason to question the integrity of the previous abandonment, or if the well is not accessible or visible. Responsibility for re-abandonment costs may be affected by the choices made by the local permitting agency, property owner, and/or developer in considering the general advice set forth in this

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letter. The PRC continues to define the person or entity responsible for reabandonment as:

1. The property owner - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of abandonment, and in its current condition does not pose an immediate danger to life, health, and property, but requires additional work solely because the owner of the property on which the well is located proposes construction on the property that would prevent or impede access to the well for purposes of remedying a currently perceived future problem, then the owner of the property on which the well is located shall obtain all rights necessary to reabandon the well and be responsible for the reabandonment.
2. The person or entity causing construction over or near the well - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of plugging and abandonment, and the property owner, developer, or local agency permitting the construction failed either to obtain an opinion from the supervisor or district deputy as to whether the previously abandoned well is required to be reabandoned, or to follow the advice of the supervisor or district deputy not to undertake the construction, then the person or entity causing the construction over or near the well shall obtain all rights necessary to reabandon the well and be responsible for the reabandonment.
3. The party or parties responsible for disturbing the integrity of the abandonment - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of plugging and abandonment, and after that time someone other than the operator or an affiliate of the operator disturbed the integrity of the abandonment in the course of developing the property, then the party or parties responsible for disturbing the integrity of the abandonment shall be responsible for the reabandonment.

No well work may be performed on any oil, gas, or geothermal well without written approval from the Division. Well work requiring approval includes, but is not limited to, mitigating leaking gas or other fluids from abandoned wells, modifications to well casings, and/or any other re-abandonment work. The Division also regulates the top of a plugged and abandoned well's minimum and maximum depth below final grade. CCR §1723.5 states well casings shall be cut off at least 5 feet but no more than 10 feet below grade. If any well needs to be lowered or raised (i.e. casing cut down or casing riser added) to meet this regulation, a permit from the Division is required before work can start.

The Division makes the following additional recommendations to the local permitting agency, property owner, and developer:

1. To ensure that present and future property owners are aware of (a) the existence of all wells located on the property, and (b) potentially significant issues associated with any improvements near oil or gas wells, the Division recommends that information regarding the above identified

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well(s), and any other pertinent information obtained after the issuance of this letter, be communicated to the appropriate county recorder for inclusion in the title information of the subject real property.

2. The Division recommends that any soil containing hydrocarbons be disposed of in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Please notify the appropriate authorities if soil containing significant amounts of hydrocarbons is discovered during development.

As indicated in PRC § 3106, the Division has statutory authority over the drilling, operation, maintenance, and abandonment of oil, gas, and geothermal wells, and attendant facilities, to prevent, as far as possible, damage to life, health, property, and natural resources; damage to underground oil, gas, and geothermal deposits; and damage to underground and surface waters suitable for irrigation or domestic purposes. In addition to the Division's authority to order work on wells pursuant to PRC §§ 3208.1 and 3224, it has authority to issue civil and criminal penalties under PRC §§ 3236, 3236.5, and 3359 for violations within the Division's jurisdictional authority. The Division does not regulate grading, excavations, or other land use issues.

If during development activities, any wells are encountered that were not part of this review, the property owner is expected to immediately notify the Division's construction site well review engineer in the Northern district office, and file for Division review an amended site plan with well casing diagrams. The District office will send a follow-up well evaluation letter to the property owner and local permitting agency.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (805) 937-7246 or via email at Bruce.Weihns@conservation.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

B 

Senior Oil and Gas Engineer

cc: Blake Foreshee - Submitter

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Wells Not Abandoned to Current Division Requirements as Prescribed by Law & Not Projected to be Built Over or Have Future Access Impeded

The wells listed below are not abandoned to current Division requirements as prescribed by law, and based upon information provided, are not projected to be built over or have future access impeded.

API	Well Designation	Operator	Well Evaluations
0411106146	Little Siberia 1		Records indicate that this well was intended to be converted to a water well. The well was drilled and left as-is with no casing installed. CalGEM has no record of this well being plugged and abandoned.
0403706211	Bullock 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surface plug does not meet requirements of § 1723.5. - Hole Fluids do not meet the requirements of § 1723 (b). - Casing shoe plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.3. <p>NOTE: This well is on APN 3251005045, adjacent to and outside of the project area.</p>
0403706217	Ralphsanch 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surface plug does not meet requirements of § 1723.5. - Casing shoe plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.3. - Base of fresh water

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			<p>plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.2 (a).</p> <p>- Hole Fluids do not meet the requirements of § 1723 (b).</p> <p>Records indicate that this well was intended to be converted to a water well. CalGEM has no record of this well being fully plugged and abandoned.</p>
0403706218	Ralphsanch 2		<p>- Casing shoe plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.3.</p>
0411106147	Schmidt 1		<p>-Casing shoe plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.3.</p> <p>-Surface plug does not meet the requirements of § 1723.5.</p>

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State of California – Natural Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
 South Coast Region
 3883 Ruffin Road
 San Diego, CA 92123
 (858) 467-4201
wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



December 18, 2023

Katie Metraux
 Project Manager
 California Department of Parks and Recreation
 Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
 Post Office Box 942896
 Sacramento, CA 92496
 Via email to: info@PlanHungryValley.com

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE HUNGRY VALLEY STATE VEHICULAR RECREATION AREA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, SCH #2023110034

Dear Katie Metraux:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Notice of Preparation (NOP) from California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) for the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area General Plan Update (Project) pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California’s **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State. (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a).) CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. (*Id.*, § 1802.) Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW’s lake and streambed alteration regulatory

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authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in “take” as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) or the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish & G. Code, §1900 et seq.), the Project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

Objective: The objective of the Project is to establish the long-range purpose and vision for Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and update the current General Plan, which was adopted in 1981. Hungry Valley SVRA includes six land use areas with different characteristics, activities or allowable uses, resources, and related management mandates. The proposed General Plan Update would maintain the existing land use designations while modifying allowable off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation boundaries of select areas. State Parks would manage natural, cultural, and physical resources to protect the resources’ integrity in alignment with the goals and guidelines established in the proposed General Plan Update.

Discrete improvements throughout Hungry Valley SVRA are envisioned with the proposed General Plan Update. These improvements include an additional vehicular access entry, new community event area, and new recreational vehicle (RV) campground with full hookups in the Condor Mesa Area along Frazier Mountain Park Road; a new visitor center, reservable group campground, skills track, and staging area near Smith Forks Campground; a designated unmanned aerial vehicle area within the Quail Canyon Special Event Area; a new kid’s track near the Edison Canyon Campground; and formalization of existing trail connections, construction of new trail connections, and paving or repaving of Gold Hill, Hungry Valley, and Quail Canyon roads.

Location: The Hungry Valley SVRA is located in Los Angeles, Kern, and Ventura counties near the communities of Gorman and Lebec, adjacent to Interstate 5 at Tejon Pass. Lands of the Los Padres National Forest are to the west and the Angeles National Forest is to the south and east.

Background: Hungry Valley SVRA was acquired by the state with money from the Off-Highway-Vehicle Fund and has been in operation as an officially recognized SVRA since approximately 1980. Prior to its acquisition by the state, most of the land was privately owned, and control of unlawful riding was difficult. When the state purchased SVRA lands in 1978, OHV activity was heavy in the upper end of Hungry Valley proper, and moderate in the hills overlooking Gorman and on the southern border of the unit.

Biological Setting: Hungry Valley SVRA encompasses approximately 19,625 acres of land dominated by a desert environment. Major vegetation communities include chaparral, pinyon-juniper woodland, native and non-native grasslands, riparian, juniper-yucca open woodland, oak woodland, and rabbitbrush-sagebrush shrubland.

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Hungry Valley SVRA currently includes a unique six-square-mile area along the northern boundary that is covered by native valley grasslands. A management plan formulated in 1981 created the Hungry Valley Native Grasslands Management Area. The recently acquired 845-acre Condor Mesa Area is proposed for inclusion in the Native Grasslands Management Area and would be managed accordingly. With the inclusion of this new area, the Native Grasslands Management Area would increase to almost eight square miles in size. Camping is not permitted in the Native Grasslands Management Area except in the proposed RV campground in the Condor Mesa Area along Frazier Mountain Park Road.

Most of the grassland community on the floor of Hungry Valley is dominated by exotic grasses, including soft chess, cheatgrass, blue grass, and foxtail.

Hungry Valley SVRA also contains a 60-acre Oak Woodland Natural Preserve, which protects an oak woodland habitat and natural seep that provides water for immense valley oaks, with an understory of native grasses. This extremely rare and unique habitat is closed permanently to motorized recreation.

Hungry Valley SVRA has the potential to support various sensitive species, including Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*; CESA candidate endangered), arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*; Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed endangered, California Species of Special Concern (SSC)), blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*; ESA-and CESA-listed endangered, State Fully Protected Species), California glossy snake (*Arizona elegans occidentalis*; SSC), California legless lizard (*Anniella stebbinsi*; SSC), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*; SSC), coastal whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*; SSC), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*; SSC), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; SSC), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*; SSC), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*; ESA-listed threatened, SSC), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*; CESA-listed threatened), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*; SSC), southern grasshopper mouse (*Onychomys torridus ramona*; SSC), Tehachapi pocket mouse (*Perognathus alticola inexpectatus*; SSC), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*; SSC), and pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*; SSC).

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist State Parks in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources.

- 1) **Crotch's Bumble Bee:** Recently, the California Fish and Game Commission accepted a petition to list the Crotch's bumble bee as endangered under CESA, determining the listing "may be warranted" and advancing the species to the candidacy stage of the CESA listing process. CDFW considers adverse impacts to a species protected by CESA, for the purposes of CEQA, to be significant without mitigation. There is potential for Crotch's bumble bee to occur within the SVRA. Crotch's bumble bees primarily nest in late February through late October underground in abandoned small mammal burrows but may also nest under perennial bunch grasses or thatched annual grasses,

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under-brush piles, in old bird nests, and in dead trees or hollow logs (Williams et al., 2014; Hatfield et al., 2018). Overwintering sites utilized by Crotch's bumble bee queens include soft, disturbed soil (Goulson, 2010), or under leaf litter or other debris (Williams et al., 2014).

CDFW recommends that a qualified entomologist familiar with the species' behavior and life history conduct surveys within one year prior to vegetation removal and/or ground disturbance to determine the presence/absence of Crotch's bumble bee. CDFW has published a Survey Considerations document for CESA Candidate Bumble Bees, which can be found at the following link: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/CESA>. This document describes factors such as evaluating potential for presence, habitat assessment, and survey methods.

- 2) **Project Description and Alternatives:** To enable CDFW to adequately review and comment on the proposed Project from the standpoint of the protection of plants, fish, wildlife, and natural habitats, we recommend the following information be included in the EIR:
 - a. The document should contain a complete discussion of the purpose and need for, and description of, the proposed Project, including all staging areas and access routes to the construction and staging areas.
 - b. A range of feasible alternatives should be included to ensure that alternatives to the proposed project are fully considered and evaluated; the alternatives should avoid or otherwise minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources. Specific alternative locations should be evaluated in areas with lower resource sensitivity where appropriate.
- 3) **Historical Context:** State Parks has been managing Hungry Valley as a SVRA for over 40 years under the guidance of various management plans and programs, including those for soil conservation, wildlife habitat protection, the Native Grasslands Management Area, and invasive plant control. The document should include a discussion of the history of the property, including a comparison of the current condition to that in existence when the original General Plan was adopted in 1981. The document should include the most recent updates to any management plans, as well as a discussion of known management challenges and successful solutions encountered over the years. The document should include a discussion of methods used for control of Dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), including the use of weevils as biocontrol.
- 4) **Siting of Facilities and Trails:** The document should include a discussion of the criteria used to select the locations of new facilities, and best management practices for trail siting and design. The discussion should, in particular, address the considerations for natural resources used in the decision making process. Comprehensive biological surveys should be conducted at each proposed facility and trail site, and the survey results should be included in the document.

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- 5) **Lighting Design:** Artificial night lighting can affect plants and wildlife through attraction and disorientation, loss of connectivity, interference with pollination and foraging, and disruption of circadian rhythms and lunar and seasonal cycles (Barrientos et al 2023). Methods for minimizing adverse effects of artificial night lighting include lighting only where light is necessary, turning lights off when they are not in use (e.g., motion detector), only using as much light as is needed, directing the light only where it is needed, and using the lowest possible correlated color temperature for the goal of the lighting.

CDFW recommends State Parks prepare a lighting plan that discusses the criteria used in selecting the various types of lighting fixtures, a schedule detailing the hours the various lights will be on, and steps taken by State Parks to minimize adverse effects. If State Parks has developed best management practices for lighting design, those protocols should be discussed in the EIR. If protocols do not yet exist, CDFW recommends State Parks consider adapting the guidance provided in the Bureau of Land Management's Night Sky and Dark Environments: Best Management Practices for Artificial Light at Night on BLM-Managed Lands Technical Note 457 (Sullivan et al., 2023), or other examples of best management practices such as can be found on DarkSky International's website (<https://darksky.org/>).

- 6) **Biological Resource Inventory:** The document should provide a complete assessment of the flora and fauna within and adjacent to the Project area, with particular emphasis upon identifying endangered, threatened, sensitive, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats. This should include a complete floral and faunal species compendium of the entire Project site, undertaken at the appropriate time of year. Particular detail should be provided for areas proposed for a change in use or construction activities, and for the newly acquired Condor Mesa Area. The EIR should include the following information.
- a. CEQA Guidelines, section 15125(c), specifies that knowledge on the regional setting is critical to an assessment of environmental impacts and that special emphasis should be placed on resources that are rare or unique to the region.
 - b. A thorough, recent floristic-based assessment of special status plants and natural communities, following CDFW's Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (see <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants/Info>). CDFW recommends that floristic, alliance-based and/or association-based mapping and vegetation impact assessments be conducted at the Project site and neighboring vicinity. The Manual of California Vegetation, second edition, should also be used to inform this mapping and assessment (Sawyer et al. 2008). Adjoining habitat areas should be included in this assessment where site activities could lead to direct or indirect impacts offsite. Habitat mapping at the alliance level will help establish baseline vegetation conditions.
 - c. A current inventory of the biological resources associated with each habitat type on site and within the area of potential effect. CDFW's California Natural Diversity Data

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Base in Sacramento should be contacted at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/BIOS> to obtain current information on any previously reported sensitive species and habitat, including Significant Natural Areas identified under Chapter 12 of the Fish and Game Code.

- d. An inventory of rare, threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species on site and within the area of potential effect. Species to be addressed should include all those which meet the CEQA definition (see CEQA Guidelines, § 15380). This should include sensitive fish, wildlife, reptile, and amphibian species. Seasonal variations in use of the Project area should also be addressed. Focused species-specific surveys, conducted at the appropriate time of year and time of day when the sensitive species are active or otherwise identifiable, are required. Acceptable species-specific survey procedures should be developed in consultation with CDFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 7) **Biological Impacts:** To provide a thorough discussion of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts expected to adversely affect biological resources, with specific measures to offset such impacts, the following should be addressed in the EIR.
 - a. A discussion of potential adverse impacts from lighting, noise, human activity, exotic species, recreational uses, and drainage. Mitigation measures proposed to alleviate such impacts should be included.
 - b. A discussion regarding indirect Project impacts on biological resources, including resources in nearby public lands, open space, adjacent natural habitats, riparian ecosystems, and any designated and/or proposed or existing reserve lands.
 - 8) **Mitigation for Project-related Biological Impacts:** The EIR should include mitigation measures for Project-related impacts to sensitive plants, animals, and habitats. Mitigation measures should emphasize avoidance and reduction of Project impacts. For unavoidable impacts, compensatory mitigation should be discussed in detail.
 - 9) **Incidental Take Authorization:** Take of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) or the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish & G. Code, §1900 et seq.) is prohibited, except as authorized by state law (Fish & G. Code, §§ 2080, 2085).

If the Project, Project construction, or any Project-related activity during the life of the Project will result in take of any such species, CDFW recommends that State Parks seek appropriate take authorization prior to implementing the Project. Appropriate authorization may include an incidental take permit (ITP), a consistency determination, or other options (Fish & G. Code §§ 2080.1, 2081, subds. (b), (c)). Early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to a Project and mitigation measures may be required to obtain a CESA Permit. Biological mitigation, monitoring, and reporting proposals should be of sufficient detail and resolution to satisfy the requirements for a CESA ITP. CDFW may be required to prepare a separate CEQA document for the issuance of an ITP unless the Project CEQA document addresses all Project impacts to

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CESA-listed species and specifies a mitigation, monitoring, and reporting program that will meet the requirements of an ITP.

- 10) **Wetlands, Streams, and Riparian Areas:** It is the policy of CDFW to strongly discourage development in wetlands or conversion of wetlands to uplands. We oppose any development or conversion that would result in a reduction of wetland acreage or wetland habitat values, unless, at a minimum, Project mitigation assures there will be “no net loss” of either wetland habitat values or acreage. Development and conversion include but are not limited to conversion to subsurface drains, placement of fill or building of structures within the wetland, and channelization or removal of materials from the streambed. All wetlands and watercourses, whether ephemeral, intermittent, or perennial, should be retained and provided with substantial setbacks that preserve the riparian and aquatic values and maintain their value to on-site and off-site wildlife populations. Mitigation measures to compensate for impacts to mature riparian corridors must be included in the EIR and must compensate for the loss of function and value of a wildlife corridor.

CDFW has regulatory authority over activities in streams and/or lakes that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank (which may include associated riparian resources) of any river, stream, or lake, or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake. For any such activities, the Project applicant (or “entity”) must provide written notification to CDFW pursuant to section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code. Based on this notification and other information, CDFW determines whether a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) with the applicant is required prior to conducting the proposed activities. CDFW’s issuance of a LSAA will require CEQA compliance actions by CDFW as a Responsible Agency. CDFW as a Responsible Agency under CEQA may consider State Parks’ Environmental Impact Report for the Project. To minimize additional requirements by CDFW pursuant to section 1600 et seq. and/or under CEQA, the document should fully identify the potential impacts to any stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting commitments for issuance of the LSAA.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Instructions for submittal are available online at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB>. Additionally, information on special status native plant populations and sensitive natural communities should be submitted to CDFW’s Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program. Instructions for submittal are available online at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/Natural-Communities/Submit>.

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ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEES


The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of environmental document filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the environmental document filing fee is required in order for the underlying Project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the NOP to assist State Parks in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources.

Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Kelly Fisher, Environmental Scientist, (858) 354-5083 or Kelly.Fisher@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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David Mayer
Environmental Program Manager
South Coast Region

ec: CDFW
Jennifer Turner, San Diego – Jennifer.Turner@wildlife.ca.gov
Lawrence (Larry) Bonner, San Luis Obispo – Lawrence.Bonner@wildlife.ca.gov
Krista Tomlinson, Fresno – Krista.Tomlinson@wildlife.ca.gov
Cindy Hailey, San Diego – Cindy.Hailey@wildlife.ca.gov

OPR
State Clearinghouse, Sacramento – State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

REFERENCES

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