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1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed Project evaluated in this Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) is the Newhall Ranch Resource Management and Development Plan (RMDP) and the Spineflower Conservation Plan (SCP) (proposed Project).¹ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are the lead agencies responsible for preparation of this joint EIS/EIR. The EIS/EIR has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21000 *et seq.*). The Project applicant and landowner is The Newhall Land and Farming Company (Newhall Land or applicant). The applicant is requesting federal and state permits, agreements, and authorizations from the Corps, CDFG, and other agencies to implement the proposed Project.

The proposed Project consists of two components. The first component is the RMDP, which is a conservation, mitigation, and permitting plan for sensitive biological resources within the previously approved Newhall Ranch Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area. The RMDP would be relied upon to obtain federal and state permits to implement infrastructure improvements required to facilitate build-out of the approved Specific Plan. The RMDP is intended to direct both resource management and development on the Specific Plan site. The proposed Project and its relationship to the approved Specific Plan are described in **Subsection 1.3**, below.

The second component of the proposed Project is the SCP, which is a conservation and management plan to permanently protect and manage a system of preserves designed to maximize the long-term persistence of the San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi ssp. fernandina*; spineflower), a federal candidate and a state-listed endangered plant species. The SCP would address known spineflower located within the Specific Plan area and two study areas, the Valencia Commerce Center (VCC) and Entrada planning areas. The proposed Project and its relationship to the VCC and Entrada planning areas are described in **Subsection 1.3**, below.

Both the RMDP and SCP are stand-alone planning documents, which are included in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIS/EIR. Both plans are described further below.

1.1.1 Resource Management Development Plan Component

The RMDP component of the proposed Project is a conservation, mitigation, and permitting plan for the long-term management of sensitive biological resources in conjunction with infrastructure improvements within the 11,999-acre Specific Plan area, located in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California. The Specific Plan was approved by Los Angeles County on May 27, 2003 to guide development of a new community composed of a broad range of residential, mixed-use, and nonresidential land uses within villages on the Specific Plan site. Subsequent development plans, subdivision maps, and federal and state

¹ Terms used frequently throughout this EIS/EIR are abbreviated in a parenthetical the first time the term is used in this document.

permitting, consultations, and agreements were anticipated to be required to facilitate build-out of the Specific Plan.

The resource management portion of the RMDP would guide the future resource conservation, mitigation, and permitting needed for the long-term management of sensitive biological resources within the Specific Plan. The development plan portion of the RMDP consists of physical infrastructure improvements located in or adjacent to the Santa Clara River and its tributary drainages that are required to facilitate development of the approved Specific Plan. Please refer to **Subsection 1.2**, below, for a summary description of the Project location.

The RMDP infrastructure components are briefly summarized, as follows:

- **Bridges and Road Crossing Culverts.** Three bridges and 15 new road crossing culverts would be installed to serve the Specific Plan, and to accommodate future traffic associated with development of the Specific Plan and the region. The three bridges would be located over the main stem of the Santa Clara River. Fifteen new road crossing culverts would cross six drainages tributary to the Santa Clara River (Chiquito, San Martinez Grande, Lion, Long, Potrero, and Ayers Canyons).
- **Bank Stabilization.** Bank stabilization/protection would be installed along portions of the Santa Clara River Corridor and its tributary drainages within the RMDP site. Building pad elevation of the ground surface also would occur in areas along the Santa Clara River and major tributary drainages in order to protect land uses from flooding. In addition, all applicable development areas would be raised above the FEMA flood hazard elevation to protect land uses from flooding.
- **Drainage Facilities.** Drainage facilities would be installed and include open and closed drainage systems, inlets, outlets, bank stabilization, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water quality basins.
- **Water Quality Control Facilities.** Pursuant to NPDES requirements, Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented including water quality control facilities (*e.g.*, water quality basins, debris basins, detention basins, *etc.*).

Tributary Drainages²

- **Modified Tributary Drainages -- Existing Channels Stabilized.** Due to existing degraded conditions, and in order to accommodate the Specific Plan development, portions of the existing major tributary drainages within the RMDP site (portions of Chiquito Canyon, San Martinez Grande Canyon, and Lion Canyon) would require stabilizing treatments to protect the channel and surrounding development from excessive vertical scour and lateral channel migration. The existing drainages would remain intact, but would sustain permanent and

² A detailed description of the tributary drainages is found in **Subsection 4.1.4.2.2**, Surface Water Hydrology and Flood Control of this EIS/EIR.

temporary impacts from construction of stabilization elements, including buried bank stabilization and grade stabilization structures.

- **Modified Tributary Drainages -- Regraded Channels.** Due to the existing degraded conditions within portions of some drainages in the RMDP site (Potrero Canyon, Long Canyon, and portions of Chiquito, San Martinez Grande, and Lion canyons), stabilization of the existing drainages is not feasible; and, therefore, in order to meet the County's flood protection objectives, these drainages would be graded, and a new drainage would be constructed in the same or similar location. The new drainages would be designed to incorporate buried bank stabilization and grade stabilization, and have sufficient hydrologic capacity to pass the Los Angeles County Capital Flood without the need for clearing vegetation from the channels. The new channel banks would be planted with riparian vegetation following construction.
- **Unmodified (Preserved) Drainages.** Among the minor tributary drainages within the RMDP site, some are not in a degraded condition; others are located in areas where no impacts are proposed; and others are distant enough from surrounding development that bank stabilization is not required. These drainages would remain in their existing condition; the RMDP does not propose to impact or enhance these drainages.
- **Drainages Converted to Buried Storm Drain.** Some of the drainages within the RMDP site, including many of the smaller drainages, would be graded to facilitate build-out of the Specific Plan. The wet-weather flows in these drainages meet the Los Angeles County flood criteria (less than 2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs)) to be conveyed by storm drain, and would be discharged to the Santa Clara River *via* proposed storm drain outlets.
- **Utility Corridor and Crossings.** The corridor alignment generally extends parallel to the south side of State Route 126 (SR-126) north of the Santa Clara River. Various electrical, sewer, water, gas, and communications lines would be installed across tributary drainages within an approximately 100-foot wide corridor alignment to serve the Specific Plan. Utility lines would be installed in rights-of-way adjacent to bridges where access for installation and maintenance can be easily accommodated. Utilities also would be extended across the Santa Clara River and its tributaries to serve the Specific Plan.
- **Temporary Haul Routes for Grading Equipment.** Temporary haul routes across the Santa Clara River would be used during construction to move equipment and excavated soil to locations in the RMDP site in accordance with Specific Plan Conceptual Grading Plan.
- **WRP Outfall Construction Activities.** An effluent outfall pipeline would be constructed from the Newhall Ranch Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) through the bank stabilization to the bed of the Santa Clara River. An earthen channel and adjacent walkway also would be constructed to reach the actual flow path of the river.

- **Roadway Improvements to SR-126.** Various roadway improvements, including SR-126 widening and a grade-separated crossing at Long Canyon Road/SR-126, would be needed within the vicinity of the RMDP site.
- **Maintenance Activities.** The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) or other entity would conduct regular and ongoing maintenance of flood, drainage, and water quality protection facilities on the RMDP site.
- **Recreation Facilities.** In addition to the comprehensive system of bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails that would be implemented by the adopted Specific Plan Master Trails Plan, the RMDP proposes to construct five nature viewing platforms that would be located in or adjacent to jurisdictional areas in the Santa Clara River corridor.
- **Geotechnical Investigation Activities.** To accommodate the Specific Plan development, geotechnical investigations and associated activities would be undertaken to ensure that the development would be safely constructed in accordance with all applicable geotechnical reports, studies, and standards.
- **Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Activities.** The RMDP incorporates a variety of habitat enhancement and restoration activities along and within the Santa Clara River and its tributary drainages.

Detailed descriptions of the RMDP infrastructure components are provided in **Subsection 2.1.1** and **Section 2.6** of this EIS/EIR.

The proposed RMDP infrastructure and maintenance activities require federal and state permits, consultations, and agreements from the Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), CDFG, and other agencies. The proposed improvements and activities require such permitting because the activities would affect waters, riverbeds, or banks within the jurisdictional limits of the Corps and CDFG, or would potentially affect listed or threatened species, thereby requiring USFWS and/or CDFG approvals. The RMDP also would include various measures necessary under CEQA to mitigate, to the extent feasible, significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed Project, including impacts that fall within CDFG's charge as a trustee agency for fish and wildlife resources in California.

The RMDP would guide future resource conservation, mitigation, and permitting for the long-term management of sensitive biological resources in conjunction with the proposed infrastructure and facilities required to implement the approved Specific Plan. As such, the RMDP is one of the Project components under review by the Corps and CDFG in this joint EIS/EIR.

The contents of the RMDP are briefly described as follows:

Section 1.0 provides an overview of the RMDP, its study area, and its purpose/need. Section 2.0 identifies the goals and objectives of the RMDP, and Section 3.0 discusses the regulatory framework and permitting process for the RMDP. Section 4.0 describes the existing environmental setting and approved land uses

within the RMDP area. Section 5.0 discusses the resource management and preserve design principles and methodology, design considerations, resource protection, and RMDP implementation. Section 6.0 describes the RMDP development components related to the implementation of the Specific Plan. Section 7.0 identifies the mitigation and management activities based on the resources within or adjacent to the Specific Plan site, and Section 8.0 discusses the monitoring and maintenance actions required by the RMDP. Section 9.0 describes the adaptive management techniques used in the RMDP, and Section 10.0 contains the RMDP reporting processes. Section 11.0 sets forth the funding mechanisms of the RMDP, Section 12.0 identifies the parties responsible for implementation of the RMDP, and Section 13.0 lists the references used in preparing the RMDP.

1.1.2 Spineflower Conservation Plan Component

The second component of the proposed Project is the SCP, which is a conservation and management plan to permanently protect and manage a system of preserves designed to maximize the long-term persistence of the San Fernando Valley spineflower. The SCP encompasses the Specific Plan area, the VCC planning area, and portions of the Entrada planning area, in order to conduct conservation planning and preserve design on the applicant's land holdings in Los Angeles County that contain known spineflower populations. The SCP describes a preserve system proposed by the applicant. The management and monitoring components of the SCP have been developed in consultation with CDFG.

The applicant intends to rely on the SCP to obtain federal and state permits, agreements, and authorizations from USFWS and CDFG to protect and manage spineflower preserves, and authorize take (*i.e.*, removal) of spineflower in areas located outside of the designated preserves. The SCP, if approved, would facilitate development within the Specific Plan, the VCC planning area, and portions of the Entrada planning area.

The SCP sets forth biological goals and objectives as cornerstones of the adaptive spineflower management program. Three main goals for the spineflower preserves are presented in the SCP. The SCP also describes a set of objectives for attaining the goals, along with a brief explanation or rationale for each objective.

The contents of the SCP are briefly described as follows:

Section 1.0 provides an introduction to the SCP, its study area, and purpose/need. Section 2.0 discusses the relevant background and regulatory framework for the spineflower, and Section 3.0 identifies the SCP's goals and objectives. Section 4.0 summarizes the biological data for the spineflower, and includes a description of the results of previous and on-going pollination, germination, and viability studies that have been conducted on land in Ventura County (formerly known as Ahmanson Ranch), and within the applicant's property holdings in Los Angeles County. Section 5.0 describes the results of several years of annual surveys and the occurrence data for spineflower within the applicant's property holdings. Section 6.0 describes the existing and planned environmental setting within the SCP study area. Section 7.0 describes the methodology used to identify and design the five proposed spineflower preserve systems within the applicant's property holdings, and discusses spineflower distribution data, habitat suitability, and ecological indicators suggested by CDFG in designing proposed preserve areas, including preserve

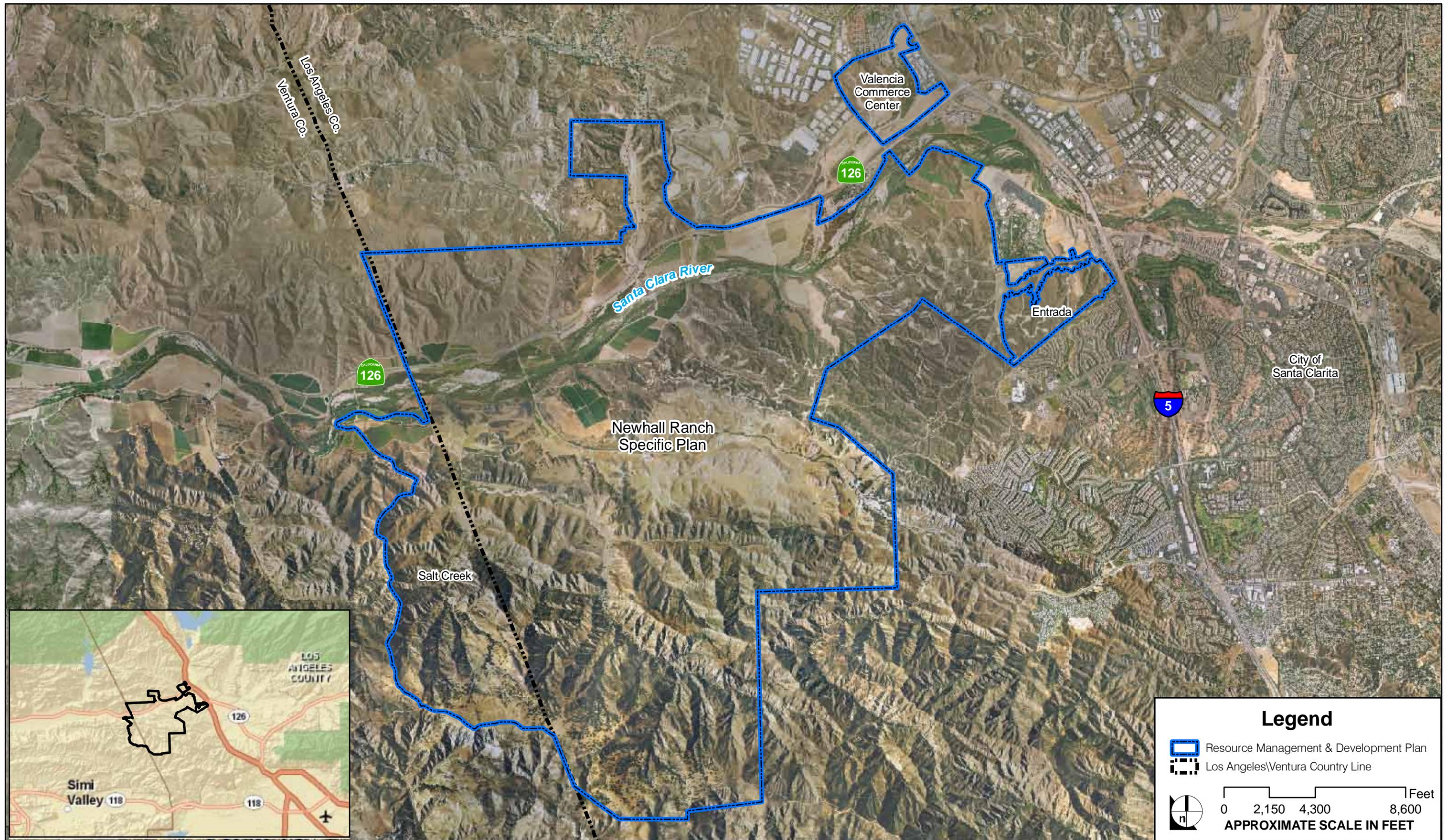
connectivity. Section 8.0 describes the proposed preserve areas, and Section 9.0 describes the proposed management measures for the permanent spineflower preserve areas, including retention of a preserve manager to perform environmental monitoring and oversight, and to ensure implementation of the monitoring and management activities described in the SCP.

Section 10.0 describes the adaptive management and remedial measures for the proposed spineflower preserve areas, and proposes restoration and enhancement activities within preserves. Section 11.0 describes the long-term biological monitoring of the spineflower preserve areas to track the viability of spineflower populations and ensure long-term persistence of the spineflower within the applicant's property holdings, and specific maintenance activities are identified to maintain the preserves in compliance with specified performance standards. Section 12.0 describes a spineflower introduction program, and Section 13.0 describes the funding requirements imposed on the applicant, or its designee for the management, monitoring, and reporting measures described in the SCP. Section 14.0 identifies the responsible parties, Section 15.0 describes spineflower reporting requirements, and Section 16.0 presents a schedule for implementing the SCP. Section 17.0 quantifies and describes impacts to spineflower that are not avoided in the development plans proposed within the Specific Plan area, the VCC planning area, and portions of the Entrada planning area, and documents the ways in which identified spineflower impacts have been avoided, minimized, and fully mitigated. Section 18.0 identifies the references used in preparing the SCP.

Detailed descriptions of the SCP components are provided in **Subsection 2.1.2** and **Section 2.7** of this EIS/EIR.

1.2 SUMMARY OF PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Project is located in a portion of the Santa Clara River Valley in northwestern Los Angeles County, between the city of Santa Clarita and the Los Angeles County/Ventura County jurisdictional boundary line. The RMDP and SCP study areas constitute the Project area for purposes of this EIS/EIR. **Figure 1.0-1** depicts the entire Project area. On a regional level, the city of Santa Clarita is located to the east of the Project area. The Los Angeles County/Ventura County jurisdictional boundary line and the Salt Creek area located in Ventura County adjacent to this westerly boundary form the western edge of the Project area. The Los Padres National Forest is located to the north of the Project area, the Angeles National Forest lies to the north and east, and the Santa Susana Mountains are to the south (**Figure 1.0-1**).



SOURCE: PACE 2008

FIGURE 1.0-1
PROJECT AREA

1.3 BACKGROUND

The RMDP and SCP components of the proposed Project would be undertaken in the approved Specific Plan area; and the SCP component would be implemented in the Specific Plan area, the VCC planning area, and a portion of the Entrada planning area. For context, this section describes the relationship of the proposed Project to the Specific Plan and the VCC and Entrada planning areas. For more detailed descriptions of the Specific Plan and the VCC and Entrada planning areas, please see **Subsections 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3**, respectively.

1.3.1 Relationship Of Proposed Project To The Newhall Ranch Specific Plan

As discussed below, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the Specific Plan, the Specific Plan's WRP, and associated environmental documentation on May 27, 2003. The County's approved environmental documentation contemplated the need for future federal and state permits, agreements, and authorizations from federal, state, and other agencies.

This joint EIS/EIR has been prepared at the direction of the Corps and CDFG to analyze the direct, indirect, secondary, and cumulative impacts associated with project-specific infrastructure improvements and maintenance activities in or adjacent to the Santa Clara River and its tributary drainages located within the approved Specific Plan site. The approved Specific Plan site is located in northwestern Los Angeles County and encompasses approximately 11,999 acres.³ The Santa Clara River and SR-126 traverse the northern portion of the Specific Plan site. The River extends approximately five and one-half miles east to west across the Specific Plan site. Federal and state permitting from the Corps, USFWS, CDFG and other agencies are required to facilitate Specific Plan improvements and activities, because they would affect waters, riverbed, or banks within the jurisdictional limits of the Corps and CDFG, or would potentially affect listed threatened or endangered species, thereby requiring USFWS and/or CDFG approval.

This joint EIS/EIR represents a stand-alone environmental assessment, focusing on the two specific Project components affecting geographical areas in and adjacent to the Specific Plan and such areas within the jurisdiction of the Corps, USFWS, CDFG, and other agencies. However, the previously certified Newhall Ranch environmental documentation provides important information and analysis for the RMDP and SCP components of the proposed Project. Implementation of these Project components would require federal and state permitting, consultation, and agreements that are needed to facilitate development of the approved land uses within the Specific Plan site. Further, if approved, the proposed Project would establish comprehensive spineflower preserves within the Specific Plan area, also facilitating development of the approved Specific Plan. Due to this relationship, the Newhall Ranch environmental documentation, findings, and mitigation are referenced in this document to provide context for the proposed Project. In addition, this joint EIS/EIR describes below the prior Specific Plan

³ The total acreage shown in the adopted Specific Plan (May 2003) is 11,963 acres. Since approval of the Specific Plan in May 2003, more recent project-specific information has been developed, which shows that the total gross acres of the Specific Plan area is approximately 11,999 acres.

environmental review process, the approved Specific Plan and WRP, and the environmental documentation previously certified by Los Angeles County.

1.3.1.1 Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Environmental Review Process

By way of background, from 1996 through 1999, Los Angeles County conducted numerous public hearings regarding the proposed development of the Specific Plan and WRP, related project approvals, and environmental documentation. The planning and environmental review process culminated in the initial approval of the Specific Plan and WRP on March 23, 1999.

At that time, Los Angeles County unanimously: (1) certified the adequacy of a final program EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, and a project-level EIR for the WRP (State Clearinghouse (SCH) No. 1995011015); (2) adopted CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations; (3) approved the Mitigation Monitoring Plans for the Specific Plan and the WRP; and (4) adopted the various project approvals for the Specific Plan and WRP, including General Plan and Sub-Plan Amendments, Zone Change, Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 24500, the Specific Plan, and the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Conditional Use Permit (CUP).⁴

In the certified environmental documentation prepared under CEQA, the impacts associated with Specific Plan development within the Newhall Ranch River Corridor Special Management Area (SMA)/SEA 23 were assessed, including bridge crossings over the Santa Clara River (*i.e.*, Long Canyon Road Bridge, Commerce Center Drive Bridge,⁵ and the Potrero Canyon Road Bridge), trails, bank stabilization, drainage facilities, and other improvements. The assessment was conducted at a program level, and the County approved the program-level SEA CUP for boundary adjustments to, and development within, both the River Corridor SMA/SEA 23 and the High Country SMA/SEA 20 portions of the Specific Plan.

The County's approvals were then challenged in court by various parties in a consolidated legal action.

On August 1, 2000, the trial court issued a writ of mandate and judgment ordering the County to partially set aside the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR and project approvals, and to conduct additional analyses of certain specified environmental and planning issues. In its decision, the trial court also determined that a vast majority of the County's environmental determinations for the Specific Plan and WRP had been made lawfully and declined to set aside approval of the entire Specific Plan and Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR.

In response to the trial court's decision, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution partially setting aside certification of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR and related project approvals, and directed County staff to oversee preparation of additional environmental

⁴ In this joint EIS/EIR, the certified Newhall Ranch environmental documents are sometimes collectively referred to as the "Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR."

⁵ This bridge also was permitted by the Corps and CDFG as part of the previously approved Natural River Management Plan.

analyses with respect to the issues identified by the court. Thereafter, the County oversaw completion of the Newhall Ranch Revised Additional Analysis (SCH No. 1995011015).⁶

After numerous public hearings, on May 27, 2003, Los Angeles County: (1) certified the adequacy of the Newhall Ranch Revised Additional Analysis in conjunction with the previously certified Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR; (2) reinstated the approved General Plan and Sub-Plan Amendments, the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan (as revised), Zone Change, and SEA CUP; (3) adopted additional CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations; and (4) approved revised Mitigation Monitoring Plans for the Specific Plan and WRP. Los Angeles County also found that the Newhall Ranch Revised Additional Analysis was completed in compliance with both CEQA and the terms of the trial court's decision and writ.

In August 2003, the County and the applicant filed a "return" to the trial court, requesting a discharge of the court's writ based on the County's compliance with CEQA and the trial court's prior decision. On October 22, 2003, after a court hearing, the trial court issued an order discharging the writ as requested. On December 18, 2003, certain parties filed an appeal of the trial court's order, and on March 29, 2004, a settlement was reached, resulting in dismissal of the pending appeal on April 1, 2004.

As a result, the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR and Final Additional Analysis are conclusively presumed to comply with CEQA. The certified environmental documentation will be used by Los Angeles County in implementing the Specific Plan and WRP.

1.3.1.2 Newhall Ranch Specific Plan

The adopted Specific Plan will guide the long-term development of the 11,999-acre Newhall Ranch community, comprising a broad range of residential, mixed-use and nonresidential land uses developed within village areas. The Specific Plan contains the approved land use plan, development regulations, design guidelines, and implementation program that are designed to create a mixed-use community consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Los Angeles County General Plan and Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. The Specific Plan is regulatory in nature and serves as the zoning for Newhall Ranch. Subsequent development plans and tentative subdivision maps must be consistent with the adopted General Plan, Area Plan, and Specific Plan.

Further, the Specific Plan establishes the regulations and standards for the protection of Open Areas adjacent to development and the two large River Corridor and High Country SMAs, totaling approximately 6,170 acres. In addition, Los Angeles County imposed a condition that required the applicant to dedicate to the public 1,517 acres of land in the Salt Creek watershed in Ventura County, adjacent to the Specific Plan. These regulations and standards are part of the Newhall Ranch Resource Management Plan, contained in Section 2.6 of the adopted Specific Plan.

⁶ The documents comprising the Newhall Ranch Final Additional Analysis are described in **Subsection 1.10** of this EIS/EIR.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As revised by the Board of Supervisors, the Specific Plan permits up to 20,885 dwelling units (excluding 423 second units).⁷ The permitted residential dwelling units (20,885) would be constructed on approximately 2,391 acres. The Specific Plan also permits mixed use development, including residential; about 67 acres of commercial uses; about 249 acres of business park uses; 36.7 acres of High Country SMA Visitor-Serving uses; approximately 1,010 acres of Open Area; approximately 5,160 acres of Open Space/SMAs; 10 neighborhood parks; recreational lake; public trail system; golf course; fire stations; public library; electrical substation; reservation of elementary school sites, junior high school site, and a high school site; a 6.8 million gallon per day (mgd) WRP; and other associated community facilities and amenities. Build-out of the Specific Plan is projected to occur over approximately 20 years, depending upon economic and market conditions.

The Specific Plan's adopted Land Use Plan and Land Use Plan Statistical Table provide the framework for development of the Specific Plan. The adopted Land Use Plan describes the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan land use designations. The designations include five types of Residential uses (estates, low density, low-medium density, medium density and high density); Mixed-Use; Commercial; Business Park; Visitor-Serving; Open Area uses; two SMAs/SEAs; and a Spineflower Conservation Overlay Easement area, all linked by a comprehensive system of roadways, trails, and paseos. Land use overlays are included on the approved Land Use Plan to show approximate locations of public facility and recreation uses, such as parks, schools, library, golf course, fire stations, and the WRP.

Individual Newhall Ranch projects will be developed over time in accordance with the approved Specific Plan. The applicant is currently processing development applications and local project-level environmental documentation to implement projects within the Specific Plan (*e.g.*, Landmark Village, Mission Village, and Homestead Village). Many of these specific development projects will require work in and near the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. The applicant has requested a long-term section 404 permit from the Corps and a Master Streambed Alteration Agreement and Incidental Take Permits from CDFG. The proposed Project to be addressed in this EIS/EIR includes those infrastructure improvements and activities associated with the Specific Plan that would require the section 404 permit, the Master Streambed Alteration Agreement, and the Incidental Take Permits.

The applicant would develop most of the infrastructure improvements and facilities contemplated by the proposed Project. However, other appropriate entities or third parties could construct some of the improvements and facilities using the federal and state approvals issued to the applicant. DPW, or other

⁷ The Specific Plan allows up to 423 second units in the Estate Residential land use designation, subject to regulations, including the following: (a) second units are only permitted on issuance of a CUP; and (b) second units must be on the same lot as the primary residence, cannot be subdivided or sold, and must meet other applicable requirements for the Estate Residential land use designation. The Specific Plan's stated purpose for second units is to provide affordable housing opportunities for seniors and extended family members. (Specific Plan, Section 3.9.) The vehicular trips from the 423 second units are already accounted for in the 20,885 total number of allowed dwelling units within the Specific Plan; and, for that reason, this EIS/EIR references the Specific Plan's permitted dwelling unit count of 20,885. In addition, the development footprint would remain the same even if one or more of the 423 second units were allowed under a CUP, because the Specific Plan's regulations require the second units to be on the same lot as the primary residence.

appropriate entity, would conduct routine maintenance activities and use the proposed section 404 permit and Master Streambed Alteration Agreement issued to the applicant. Any person or entity utilizing the proposed section 404 permit and Master Streambed Alteration Agreement would be bound by the same conditions in those permits and agreements.

1.3.1.3 Newhall Ranch Water Reclamation Plant

The WRP was approved at the project level as part of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan. It is located in one of the approved land use designations, near the western edge of the Specific Plan area, along the south side of SR-126, adjacent to the Santa Clara River, and near the Los Angeles County/Ventura County jurisdictional boundary line. The plant's treatment capacity is planned to be 6.8 mgd of wastewater generated by the Specific Plan, all of which would be treated at the WRP and, upon tertiary treatment, reclaimed for landscape irrigation purposes (except for wet winters when irrigation demands would be lower, requiring the discharge of unused reclaimed water to the Santa Clara River during periods of high river flow). Since approval of the Specific Plan, a new sanitation district has been formed to maintain and operate the WRP within the Specific Plan site.

Construction of the WRP will require outfall construction and other facilities in and near the Santa Clara River. As a result, the applicant has requested the section 404 permit and the Master Streambed Alteration Agreement to allow for all such facilities.

1.3.2 Relationship Of Proposed Project To The VCC And Entrada Planning Areas

The SCP component of the proposed Project would facilitate development of portions of the Specific Plan, and the VCC and Entrada planning areas. Specific to the VCC and Entrada planning areas, the SCP and the associated Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) specify spineflower preserve areas within the SCP study area, require management and monitoring of spineflower habitat, and authorize future take of spineflower. Information provided in the SCP is the basis for the applicant's request to CDFG under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) for an Incidental Take Permit authorizing take of state-listed endangered spineflower in areas located outside of designated spineflower preserves. This information would also be the basis for the applicant's request to USFWS under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) for a candidate conservation agreement.

1.3.2.1 The VCC Planning Area

The applicant's VCC property consists of a largely constructed commercial/industrial complex located northeast of the Specific Plan and north of SR-126. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors certified an EIR for the VCC commercial/industrial complex in September 1991 (SCH No. 87-123005), and adopted various project approvals to implement construction of the center. The Corps also has previously issued a section 404 permit for the VCC planning area, and CDFG has issued a Streambed Alteration Agreement for various projects within the area.

The SCP component of the proposed Project, if approved, would facilitate development in the VCC planning area. The VCC is reliant on the SCP and associated take authorizations, and would not be developed without the take authorizations due to grading constraints. The VCC planning area is the

remaining undeveloped portion of the VCC commercial/industrial complex currently under development by the applicant. The VCC was the subject of an EIR certified by Los Angeles County in April 1990 (SCH No. 87-123005.) The applicant recently submitted to Los Angeles County the last tentative parcel map (Tentative Parcel Map No. 18108) needed to complete build-out of the VCC planning area. The County will require preparation of an EIR in conjunction with the parcel map and related project approvals; however, the County has not yet issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the EIR or released the EIR for the remaining portion of the VCC planning area.

1.3.2.2 The Entrada Planning Area

The applicant is seeking approval from Los Angeles County for planned residential and nonresidential development within the Entrada planning area. The SCP component of the proposed Project would designate an area within the Entrada planning area as a spineflower preserve. If approved, the SCP component would include take authorization of spineflower populations in the Entrada planning area that are located outside of the designated spineflower preserve area. Thus, the planned residential and nonresidential development within portions of the Entrada planning area is reliant on the SCP and associated take authorizations, and those portions would not be developed without the take authorizations.

The applicant has submitted to Los Angeles County Entrada development applications, which cover the portion of the Entrada planning area facilitated by the SCP component of the proposed Project. However, as of this writing, the County has not yet issued a NOP of an EIR or released an EIR for Entrada. As a result, there is no underlying local environmental documentation for the Entrada planning area at this time. Thus, in contrast to both the Specific Plan site and the VCC planning area, Entrada's land plan and general plan and zoning designations have not been approved at the local level by Los Angeles County.

1.3.2.3 Summary of Status of VCC and Entrada Planning Areas

This EIS/EIR evaluates all potential significant environmental impacts resulting from proposed approval of the SCP, CCA, and spineflower take authorizations for the VCC and Entrada planning areas. The RMDP component of the proposed Project focuses only upon the Specific Plan area and the resource management, preserve design principles, and development considerations related to implementation of the Specific Plan; and, therefore, neither the RMDP components nor the RMDP-related approvals apply to the VCC and Entrada planning areas.

The VCC and Entrada planning areas are included within the Project area because the SCP component covers a larger geographical area than the RMDP, and includes all of the applicant's land holdings in Los Angeles County where spineflower is known to exist, namely, areas within the Specific Plan, and the VCC and Entrada planning areas. Because the SCP component is a spineflower conservation plan with no associated facilities or infrastructure, there are no direct impacts associated with implementing the SCP within portions of the Specific Plan, and the VCC and Entrada planning areas. However, if implemented, the SCP would facilitate approved development within the undeveloped portion of the VCC planning area and planned development within a portion of the Entrada planning area. This EIS/EIR analyzes and discloses all such impacts that would occur within the VCC and Entrada planning areas as a result of approving the SCP and associated federal and state permits and agreements. The environmental analysis for the VCC and Entrada planning areas has been comprehensively prepared, but nonetheless, it is

acknowledged that the local planning and environmental review process for the VCC and Entrada planning areas has not reached the same stage as the Specific Plan site. As a result, while detailed development-specific information is not yet available for the VCC and Entrada planning areas in light of the current state of local land use planning for these properties, the EIS/EIR has utilized the best available information to evaluate and disclose all potential significant impacts resulting from implementation of the SCP component of the proposed Project.

1.4 SUMMARY OF THE FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND PERMITTING PROCESS

This section summarizes the federal and state regulatory framework and permitting process for the proposed Project.

The federal action requested from the Corps consists of the issuance of a long-term, individual section 404 permit for the RMDP facilities and infrastructure associated with the Specific Plan that would potentially result in discharge of dredged or fill material in the Santa Clara River and its tributaries, which are considered "waters" of the United States pursuant to the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1251-1387). Prior to issuance of a final permit, the applicant also would be required to obtain a water quality certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). As part of the federal permit review process, the Corps must comply with section 7 of the ESA, which requires an endangered species consultation with the USFWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries for any permit that may affect an ESA-listed species. Formal consultation between the Corps and USFWS has been initiated and will be completed prior to issuance of a Record of Decision for the section 404 permit application.

The other federal action analyzed in this EIS/EIR is the applicant's request to enter into a CCA with USFWS, consistent with the ESA, in order to memorialize agreed upon spineflower conservation, management, and monitoring measures (conservation measures) set forth in both the Agreement and the SCP. The CCA is intended to benefit the spineflower, a federal candidate species, by obtaining the applicant's commitment to implement specified conservation measures, which, when combined with benefits that would be achieved by conservation of the spineflower in Ventura County, would preclude the need to list the spineflower at the federal level. The proposed CCA is found in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIS/EIR.

The state actions requested from CDFG related to the RMDP and SCP consist of the issuance of a long-term Master Streambed Alteration Agreement pursuant to Fish and Game Code, section 1602, and authorization for "take" of species incidental to the otherwise lawful implementation of the Specific Plan through issuance of an Incidental Take Permit pursuant to CESA, Fish and Game Code, section 2081, subdivisions (b) and (c).

The proposed Master Streambed Alteration Agreement would include avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, all or some of which the applicant must implement for a specific covered activity, and maintenance procedures that the applicant must follow to complete a specific covered activity. The measures and procedures applied to a covered activity would be those that CDFG and the applicant agree are necessary to protect fish and wildlife resources the activity could substantially adversely affect. The

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Master Streambed Alteration Agreement would be a long-term agreement (*i.e.*, greater than five years) authorized and governed by Fish and Game Code section 1605, subdivision (g).

Prior to initiating a specific activity covered by the Master Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement, the applicant would seek authorization from the CDFG to begin the activity. The authorization request would be in writing, describe the activity, include construction plans when appropriate, and identify the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures and maintenance procedures identified in the Master Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement that the applicant intends to apply to the activity.

Upon receipt of an authorization request, CDFG would first determine whether the activity is covered by the Master Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement. If the activity is not covered, the applicant could request that CDFG amend the Master Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement to include the activity after the CDFG completes any necessary additional environmental review under CEQA (see below). If the activity is covered, the CDFG would determine whether the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures and maintenance procedures identified in the authorization request are necessary and adequate to protect the fish and wildlife resources the activity could substantially adversely affect.

If the measures and procedures are necessary and adequate, the CDFG would authorize the activity without additional environmental review under CEQA. If the CDFG identifies a measure or procedure in the authorization request that is not necessary, the CDFG would exclude that measure or procedure in its authorization. If the CDFG determines that the measures and procedures identified in the authorization request are not adequate, the CDFG would include additional measures that the applicant must apply to the activity described in the authorization request and complete any necessary additional environmental review under CEQA before authorizing the activity. Any additional measures and/or procedures the CDFG requires might or might not be identified in the Master Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement. If the applicant disagrees with any of those additional measures, the CDFG and the applicant would follow the process set forth in Fish and Game Code section 1605, subdivision (g)(3), to resolve the disagreement. If the CDFG determines that individual projects and mitigation are not consistent, then the CDFG would deny the authorization request. The proposed Master Streambed Alteration Agreement is found in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIS/EIR.

Likewise, the applicant has submitted applications to the CDFG for issuance of two section 2081 Incidental Take Permits. The first application covers CESA-listed wildlife species observed in the Project area (western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), southwestern willow flycatcher, and least Bell's vireo)), special-status wildlife species observed in the Project area (arroyo toad, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*)), and undescribed plant and wildlife species observed in the Project area (sunflower (*Helianthus* sp. *nova*), everlasting (*Gnaphalium* sp. *nova*), and spring snail (*Pyrgulopsis* sp. *nova*)). If CDFG issues an Incidental Take Permit in response to this application, incidental take authorization would be granted for species that are listed at the time of permit issuance. All other species would be considered "unlisted covered species" in the permit. If, during the effective period of the permit, any unlisted covered species were subsequently listed under CESA, CDFG would give due consideration to the applicant's avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures contained in the permit when evaluating a request to amend the permit to add the species to the take authorization provided by the permit. The second application covers

the CESA-listed San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*) only. The applicant submitted formal applications to CDFG for the requested Incidental Take Permits in May and June 2008. (See generally Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 783.2, 783.3, 783.5.) These applications comprise part of the Project-related documents being released by CDFG as part of the public review process required by both CEQA and CESA. (See, e.g., *Id.*, § 783.5, subd. (d)(2).) The applicant's two Incidental Take Permit applications are found in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIS/EIR.

Authorizations required from the RWQCB include: (1) section 401 certification of the Corps' section 404 permit (or Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) issued *in lieu* of certification), which would certify that the section 404 permit will comply with state water quality requirements; (2) dewatering permit(s) (or use of the general dewatering permit) for construction dewatering needs; and (3) approval of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Sub-Regional Stormwater Mitigation Plan (Geosyntec, 2008). This Plan sets forth the urban runoff management program that would be implemented within the Specific Plan subregion, and is consistent with the Los Angeles County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP). Stormwater management, including planning for water quality and hydromodification control, is important to assuring the long-term viability of beneficial uses, including habitat systems and species dependent on those systems. The Plan assesses potential water quality and hydromodification impacts associated with Specific Plan development, and proposes control measures to address such impacts. The Sub-Regional Stormwater Mitigation Plan is found in **Appendix 4.4** of this EIS/EIR.

1.5 SUMMARY OF PROJECT COMPONENTS

This EIS/EIR evaluates the direct, indirect, secondary, and cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project and alternatives, and recommends feasible mitigation measures. Information in this EIS/EIR will be used in the decision-making process by the Corps, CDFG, USFWS, RWQCB, and any other state responsible or federal cooperating agencies, when these agencies decide whether to issue permits, agreements, or certifications requested by the applicant. In summary, the components of the proposed Project are listed below, and are described in detail in **Section 2.0**, Project Description, of this EIS/EIR. The proposed Project is comprised of the following:

- Bridges and road crossing culverts;
- Bank stabilization along the Santa Clara River and identified tributaries;
- Drainage facilities;
- Water quality control facilities;
- Modified, unmodified (preserved), and converted tributary drainages;
- Grade stabilization structures;
- Utility crossings;

- Temporary haul routes for grading and hauling equipment;
- WRP outfall construction;
- Roadway improvements to SR-126;
- Maintenance by DPW or other entity;
- Recreational facilities (including trails and nature viewing platforms);
- Geotechnical investigation activities;
- Habitat enhancement and restoration activities; and
- Spineflower Conservation Plan and Candidate Conservation Agreement.

1.6 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED/PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Project purpose/need and objectives are described in detail in **Section 2.0**, Project Description, of this EIS/EIR. In summary, the Project's overall purpose/need and objectives are two-fold.

First, the overall purpose/objective is to implement the approved Specific Plan, and thereby help to meet the regional demand for jobs and housing in Los Angeles County; and, at the same time, implement the RMDP component of the proposed Project to address long-term management of sensitive biological resources and establish preserve design principles in conjunction with the RMDP infrastructure needed to implement the approved Specific Plan in compliance with federal and state environmental protection requirements.

The second overall purpose/objective is to implement a practicable and feasible SCP that would protect and manage a system of preserves designed to maximize the long-term persistence of the spineflower within the applicant's land holdings in Los Angeles County, and to authorize the take of spineflower in areas located outside of designated preserves.

The applicant also has identified nine RMDP-specific purposes/objectives, and five SCP-specific purposes/objectives (see Project Description, **Subsections 2.1.3.2** and **2.1.3.3**, respectively). There also are four other important purposes/objectives that would be achieved with implementation of the proposed Project. **Subsection 2.1.3.4** sets forth these other important purposes/objectives.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THIS EIS/EIR

This document is a joint EIS/EIR and satisfies the requirements of both NEPA and CEQA by disclosing significant environmental impacts of the proposed Project, identifying feasible mitigation measures, and describing a range of reasonable alternatives prior to rendering any final decisions or issuing any permits, agreements, or authorizations on the proposed Project.

Under NEPA and associated regulations (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500 *et seq.*), federal agencies are required to evaluate a proposed action, including feasible and reasonable alternatives, and identify mitigation measures to minimize adverse effects when federal agencies propose to carry out, approve, or fund a proposed action that may have a significant effect on the environment. The Corps has determined that its decision as to whether to issue a long-term section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act for the RMDP infrastructure improvements associated with the approved Specific Plan requires preparation of an EIS in compliance with NEPA. The Corps is the federal lead agency under NEPA. Other federal agencies, such as the USFWS, will rely on this EIS to satisfy NEPA for their individual approvals. For the proposed Project, USFWS is expected to rely on this document in its decision whether to approve and execute the proposed CCA.

The EIS/EIR impact analysis follows federal regulations that require the scope of an EIS to be limited to the impacts of the specific activities under the NEPA lead agency's jurisdiction. For the RMDP component of the proposed Project, the specific activities subject to NEPA are those requiring a section 404 permit and only those portions of the Project outside of waters of the United States over which the Corps has sufficient control and responsibility to warrant federal review (33 C.F.R. Part 325, Appendix B). Despite this limitation, given the extent and varied location of the Corps' jurisdictional areas throughout the Specific Plan, and in consideration of the ESA and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) section 106 issues involved, the Corps has determined that there exists enough cumulative federal control to require the NEPA review to include analysis of environmental impacts to the upland portions of the Specific Plan area in addition to the Corps' jurisdictional areas. In these upland areas, the Corps will evaluate impacts to the environment, alternatives, mitigation measures, and the appropriate state or local agencies with authority to implement such measures if they are outside the authority of the Corps. In evaluating impacts to areas and resources outside the Corps' jurisdiction, the Corps will consider the information and conclusions from the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR prepared by Los Angeles County. However, the Corps will exercise its independent expertise and judgment in addressing indirect, secondary, and cumulative impacts to upland areas due to issuance of the proposed section 404 permit.⁸

Under CEQA, this document will also function as a project-level EIR to identify and disclose the proposed Project's significant environmental impacts and identify feasible mitigation measures and project alternatives. CDFG has determined that preparation and certification of the EIR in compliance with CEQA is required before CDFG may decide whether to issue the requested Master Streambed Alteration Agreement and Incidental Take Permits for proposed Project activities in compliance with CESA. (See generally Fish & G. Code, §§ 1601-1605, 2081, subdivisions (b), (c).) CDFG is the lead agency under CEQA. In this respect, this EIS/EIR will analyze significant environmental impacts that are

⁸ The analysis of secondary impacts from implementation of the proposed Project focuses on those reasonably foreseeable impacts that occur off-site or at a later point in time. Please note that the use of the term "secondary impacts" is not ordinarily used by the Corps and CDFG. Normally, the Corps and CDFG would consider secondary impacts as synonymous with indirect impacts. For purposes of this EIS/EIR, however, the Corps is referring to indirect *off-site* impacts as "secondary impacts," and CDFG is following this protocol as well. Regardless of the terminology used, all such impacts are analyzed at the same level. Please also see this EIS/EIR, **Section 4.0**, for additional explanatory information.

under CDFG's permitting authority, as well as those impacts to fish and wildlife resources held in trust by CDFG for the people of California. The EIS/EIR analyzes other impacts associated with the proposed Project, including various types of impacts not addressed by CDFG permits or related to fish and wildlife resources. The Los Angeles RWQCB is also expected to rely on this EIS/EIR in its decision whether to issue the Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification and other approvals for the proposed Project.

The standards for adequacy of an EIR, as defined in the State CEQA Guidelines, section 15151, are as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the above legal standards for adequacy of an EIR under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

The provisions governing the applicant's request for a Master Streambed Alteration Agreement are found in Fish & Game Code section 1602. Under that provision, CDFG must be notified before any activity is commenced that would substantially obstruct or divert the natural flow of a river, stream, or lake, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream, or lake. For the proposed Project, the applicant has notified CDFG of such Project activities, and has requested a Master Streambed Alteration Agreement.

The provisions governing the applicant's request to CDFG for Incidental Take Permits for proposed Project activities that would result in the take of state-listed species under CESA are found in Fish & Game Code section 2081, subdivisions (b) and (c). "Take" is defined in section 86 of the Fish & Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." As discussed below, CESA allows for authorized take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects.

Under Fish & Game Code section 2081, subdivisions (b) and (c), CDFG will only issue an Incidental Take Permit if the following criteria are met:

- The authorized take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity;
- The impacts of the authorized take are minimized and fully mitigated;
- The measures required to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts of the authorized take:
 - Are roughly proportional in extent to the impact of the take on the species;

- Maintain the applicant's objectives to the greatest extent possible;
- Are capable of successful implementation;
- Adequate funding is provided to implement the required minimization and mitigation measures and to monitor compliance with and the effectiveness of the measures; and
- Issuance of the Incidental Take Permit will not jeopardize the continued existence of a state-listed species.

As stated above, the applicant has requested that CDFG issue a long-term Master Streambed Alteration Agreement for proposed RMDP construction activities within the Specific Plan boundary. In addition, the applicant has requested an Incidental Take Permit for RMDP construction activities that may impact species during implementation of the Specific Plan. Further, the applicant has requested CDFG's approval of the SCP and issuance of an Incidental Take Permit to allow the take of spinyfinch in the SCP study area to the extent that such populations are located outside designated spinyfinch preserves.

Approval and implementation of the proposed Project would facilitate build-out of the Specific Plan, along with various development activities within the VCC and Entrada planning areas. To comply with federal and state environmental review requirements, the impacts associated with development within the Specific Plan and portions of the VCC and Entrada planning areas are analyzed in this EIS/EIR.

If approved, the RMDP component of the proposed Project would facilitate implementation of the Specific Plan, which establishes the general plan and zoning designations necessary to develop the site with residential, mixed-use, and nonresidential uses, roadways, and associated public facilities and amenities in accordance with the land use plan, development regulations, design guidelines, and implementation program in the approved Specific Plan. The Specific Plan includes the approved WRP at the western edge of the Specific Plan area, adjacent to the Santa Clara River. The applicant has applied to Los Angeles County for tentative tract (subdivision) maps with accessory entitlements for portions of the Specific Plan area (*e.g.*, Landmark Village, Mission Village, and Homestead Village). Los Angeles County is currently processing those applications, including preparation of project-level EIRs for those projects. Many of these development activities would require work in and near the Santa Clara River and its tributaries, which necessitate the requested section 404 permit from the Corps and the Master Streambed Alteration Agreement and Incidental Take Permits from CDFG. This EIS/EIR has been prepared to address the needed section 404 permit, Master Streambed Alteration Agreement, and Incidental Take Permits associated with the long-term development of the Specific Plan and associated WRP.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THIS EIS/EIR

This EIS/EIR is organized in the following sections:

Executive Summary, which identifies significant environmental effects of the proposed Project, recommends mitigation measures, and evaluates alternatives that would avoid or minimize the identified

effects of the proposed Project. The summary also identifies areas of controversy known to the Corps and CDFG, as lead agencies, and discusses issues to be resolved concerning the proposed Project.

Section 1.0, Introduction, provides a summary of the proposed Project, its location, and its relationship to the Specific Plan. It also summarizes the federal and state regulatory framework and permitting process governing the proposed Project; provides an overview of the Project components; summarizes the proposed Project's overall purpose, need, and objectives; discusses the Corps' and CDFG's compliance with NEPA and CEQA; and identifies the availability of this document for public review and the documents incorporated by reference in this EIS/EIR.

Section 2.0, Project Description, provides an introduction and summary of the proposed Project, a statement of the purpose, need, and objectives of the proposed Project, a description of the location of the proposed Project and the applicant's requested permits, approvals, and authorizations, a discussion of the background and setting of the proposed Project, and sets forth a detailed description of the RMDP and SCP components of the proposed Project.

Section 3.0, Description of Alternatives, provides a detailed description of the on-site and off-site Project alternatives considered in this EIS/EIR.

Section 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis of Alternatives and Mitigation, provides information on the proposed Project's existing conditions and the direct, indirect, and secondary impact potential. It also evaluates a range of reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed Project, and identifies feasible mitigation measures that would avoid, substantially lessen, or minimize the identified impacts of the proposed Project. This section also describes the significant impacts that would still occur after mitigation measures have been applied. Technical topics addressed in this EIS/EIR were defined by the Corps and CDFG through the Notice of Preparation/Notice of Intent process and the scoping meetings that were held on the proposed Project. The topics evaluated in this EIS/EIR are as follows:

- **Section 4.1**, Surface Water Hydrology and Flood Control;
- **Section 4.2**, Geomorphology and Riparian Resources;
- **Section 4.3**, Water Resources;
- **Section 4.4**, Water Quality;
- **Section 4.5**, Biological Resources;
- **Section 4.6**, Jurisdictional Waters and Streams;
- **Section 4.7**, Air Quality;
- **Section 4.8**, Traffic;
- **Section 4.9**, Noise;

- **Section 4.10**, Cultural Resources;
- **Section 4.11**, Paleontological Resources;
- **Section 4.12**, Agricultural Resources;
- **Section 4.13**, Geology and Geologic Hazards;
- **Section 4.14**, Land Use;
- **Section 4.15**, Visual Resources;
- **Section 4.16**, Parks, Recreation, and Trails;
- **Section 4.17**, Hazards, Hazardous Materials, and Public Safety;
- **Section 4.18**, Public Services;
- **Section 4.19**, Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice; and
- **Section 4.20**, Solid Waste.

Section 5.0, Comparison of Alternatives, includes a comparison of the proposed Project and alternatives and a summary of the environmental impacts associated with each.

Section 6.0, Cumulative Impacts, assesses the proposed Project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts in the region.

Section 7.0, Significant Irreversible Changes, Growth Inducing Impacts, and Federal Impact Considerations, addresses the proposed Project's irreversible environmental changes and growth inducing impacts. In addition, it addresses the NEPA requirements to assess impacts in the context of short-term uses versus long-term productivity, irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources, and floodplain and wetland Executive Orders.

Section 8.0, Global Climate Change, addresses the proposed Project and alternatives in relation to global warming and climate change issues.

Section 9.0, List of Preparers, presents a list of the preparers of this EIS/EIR.

Section 10.0, References Cited, lists references used in preparing this EIS/EIR.

1.9 COORDINATION/SCOPING PROCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF EIS/EIR FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

1.9.1 Agency Coordination

The Corps and CDFG have interacted with the USFWS, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Los Angeles RWQCB for purposes of scoping the issues and topics presented in this EIS/EIR. The scoping process included multiple agency-applicant meetings and site visits culminating in the release of this EIS/EIR.

1.9.2 Scoping Process

To date, the public scoping process for this EIS/EIR has included three public/agency scoping meetings jointly conducted by the Corps and CDFG. The first scoping meeting was held on February 4, 2000. However, as a result of litigation related to Los Angeles County's approval of the Specific Plan, WRP, and related EIR, the applicant elected to withdraw the proposed Project pending resolution of the litigation.

After additional analysis was conducted under CEQA by Los Angeles County for the Specific Plan and WRP, and after the County approved the revised Specific Plan, WRP, EIR, and Additional Analysis on May 27, 2003, work was again commenced on the proposed Project.

The second public/agency scoping meeting was conducted on February 19, 2004, and the third meeting was held on August 24, 2005. The third meeting was conducted because the applicant elected to add the proposed SCP/Candidate Conservation Agreement as a Project component.

The scoping meeting sign-in sheets and request to speak/written comment forms, related comment letters, and transcripts of the scoping meetings are found in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIS/EIR.

Notices of Intent (NOI) under NEPA, and Notices of Preparation (NOP) under CEQA, were published or circulated for the proposed Project. The NOIs/NOPs issued for the proposed Project are found in **Appendix 1.0**. **Table 1.0-1** also summarizes the NOI/NOP process, including the three public scoping meetings that were held for this EIS/EIR. The Corps and CDFG encouraged federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested private citizens and organizations to participate in the public scoping process.

**Table 1.0-1
Initial Agency/Public Review Process**

NOI	NOP	Public Scoping Meetings
January 26, 2000 (65 Fed.Reg. 4232-4234)	January 3, 2000	February 9, 2000, at 7:00 p.m., at Valencia High School Auditorium, 27810 N. Dickason Drive, Valencia, California
January 29, 2004 (69 Fed.Reg. 4295-4296)	February 2, 2004	February 19, 2004, at 6:30 p.m., at Castaic Middle School, 28900 Hillcrest Parkway, Castaic, California
July 19, 2005	July 27, 2005	August 24, 2005, at 6:30 p.m., at Castaic Middle School,

**Table 1.0-1
Initial Agency/Public Review Process**

NOI	NOP	Public Scoping Meetings
(70 Fed.Reg. 41380-41382)		28900 Hillcrest Parkway, Castaic, California

Source: URS, 2009.

1.9.3 Availability of the Draft EIS/EIR

The Draft EIS/EIR will be made available to the public and governmental agencies for a 60-day public comment period. Copies of the Draft EIS/EIR will be available in the offices of the lead agencies (see addresses below), at the various libraries listed below, and on CDFG's designated website for the proposed Project (www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/5/newhall). A public hearing will be held during the public comment period to receive comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR must be addressed to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ventura County Field Office
Attn: Aaron O. Allen
2151 Alessandro Drive, Suite 110
Ventura, CA 93001
Fax: (805) 585-2154

California Department of Fish and Game
Newhall Ranch EIS/EIR Project Comments
c/o Dennis Bedford
4949 Viewridge Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123
Fax: (858) 467-4299

Comments also can be sent
by e-mail to:
Aaron.O.Allen@usace.army.mil

Comments also can be sent
by e-mail to:
newhallranch@dfg.ca.gov

**Table 1.0-2
Library Locations of the Availability of the Draft EIS/EIR**

County of Los Angeles Public Library Castaic Branch	27971 Sloan Canyon Road Castaic, CA 91384
County of Los Angeles Public Library Newhall Branch	22704 West Ninth Street Santa Clarita, CA 91321
County of Los Angeles Public Library Sylmar Branch	14561 Polk Street Sylmar, CA 91342
County of Los Angeles Public Library Valencia Branch	23743 Valencia Boulevard Santa Clarita, CA 91355
Ventura County Library H.P. Wright Library Branch	57 Day Road Ventura, CA 93003
Ventura County Library Fillmore Branch	502 Second Street Fillmore, CA 93015

1.10 PROJECT AREA DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

All documents described below, and summarized throughout the EIS/EIR, are incorporated by reference and are available for public inspection and review during normal business hours at the County of Los Angeles Public Library, Valencia Branch, 23743 West Valencia Boulevard, Santa Clarita, California 91355-2191. In the alternative, if a reader is interested in reviewing one or more of the documents incorporated by reference below, or any of the documents incorporated by reference throughout this EIS/EIR, please submit your request to one of the e-mail addresses identified above for commenting purposes.

The Specific Plan, Volumes I and II (May 2003), provides a complete description of the development plan, regulations, and design guidelines necessary for implementation of the Specific Plan. In addition, the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan was the subject of environmental review under CEQA by the County of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors certified the Final EIR and Revised Additional Analysis for the Specific Plan and WRP (SCH No. 1995011015) on May 27, 2003.

The Newhall Ranch environmental documentation consists of the environmental documents listed below.⁹

- Draft EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume I (Text) and Volumes II-IV (Appendices), dated July 1996 (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Final EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volumes I-IV (Comments/Responses) (November 1997) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Final EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volumes V-VI (Comments/Responses) (March 1999) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Revised Draft EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP (March 8, 1999) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Board of Supervisors' CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations (February 1999);
- Draft Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume I (Text) and Volumes II-III (Appendices) (April 2001) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Final Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume I (Comments/Responses) and Volume II (Appendices) (October 2001) (SCH No. 1995011015);

⁹ Where this EIS/EIR relies on or otherwise refers to information from Los Angeles County's environmental documentation for the approved Specific Plan, that information will be summarized and a specific reference to the prior document will be provided. In addition, other documents have been incorporated in the EIS/EIR, and they are referenced specifically throughout this document. The purpose of this section is to highlight the foundational documents associated with the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, the partially approved development in the VCC planning area, and the proposed development in the Entrada planning area.

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- Revised Draft Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume I (Text/ Appendices) and Volume II (Appendices) (November 2002) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Final Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume III (Comments/ Responses) and Volume IV (Appendices) (March 2003) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Revised Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume V (Revised Text) (March 2003) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Final Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume VI (Comments/Responses) and Volume VII (Appendices) (May 2003) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Revised Additional Analysis for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP, Volume VIII (Final Revised Text) (May 2003) (SCH No. 1995011015);
- Board of Supervisors' Additional CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations Regarding the Newhall Ranch Final Additional Analysis to the Partially Certified Final EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and Water Reclamation Plant (May 2003); and
- Mitigation Monitoring Plans for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP (May 2003) (see **Appendix 1.0**).

In addition, the VCC planning area is subject to a final EIR (SCH No. 87-123005), which was certified by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on September 24, 1991. The certified VCC EIR consists of both the: (1) Draft EIR and technical appendices (April 1990); and (2) Final EIR, Volumes I and II (Responses to Comments) (March 1991). The VCC EIR is incorporated by reference as described above. The document is also summarized where appropriate throughout this EIS/EIR.

The County Board of Supervisors also approved VCC General Plan and Local Plan Amendment No. 88-435 to both the Los Angeles County General Plan and Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. In addition, the Board approved Zone Change No. 86-106 to change the then current zoning to allow for the VCC industrial/commercial development, and Master Conditional Use Permit No. 87-360 to establish guidelines for grading, signage, landscaping, building heights, setbacks and other design criteria. Further, the Board approved tentative parcel maps for the VCC planning area, including: (1) Tentative Parcel Map No. 19784, which required approval of Zone Change No. 88-221, CUP No. 88-221, Plan Amendment No. 88-221, and Oak Tree Permit No. 88-221; (2) Tentative Parcel Map No. 20839, which required approval of Zone Change No. 89-174, CUP No. 89-174, and Plan Amendment No. 89-174; and (3) Tentative Parcel Map Nos. 20685, 26363, and 22992.

In October 2002, Los Angeles County Regional Planning requested that the applicant complete a conformance analysis and report showing the applicant's compliance with the prior VCC project approvals and certified EIR. In summary, the VCC conformance report (October 2002) demonstrated that the applicant had complied with the conditions set forth in Master CUP No. 87-360, including substantial

conformance with the development footprint, grading, oak tree removals, building square footages, and traffic improvements.

As stated, the above documents are incorporated by reference, available for public review and inspection upon request, and are summarized where appropriate throughout this EIS/EIR. Other technical reports, studies, and other documents also are summarized throughout the EIS/EIR and incorporated by reference elsewhere in this document.

1.11 DRAFT EIS/EIR PREPARATION PROCESS

Section 9.0, List of Preparers, of this EIS/EIR identifies the background, qualifications, and experience of each agency or firm that prepared or reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR. The primary preparers/reviewers are listed below.

Agency Preparation/Review:

California Department of Fish and Game

Dennis Bedford, Project Manager
Karen Drewe, Project Coordinator

Supported by staff from:
South Coast Region
Ecosystem Conservation Division
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Executive Office, Office of Communications
Education and Outreach
Administrative Division, Information
Technology Branch
CDFG Office of the General Counsel

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Aaron Allen, D. Env.
Los Angeles District Regulatory Branch Chief

Spencer Macneil, D. Env.
Tiffany Troxell, Legal Counsel

Consulting Firm Preparation/Review (in alphabetical order):

Aspen Environmental Group

Austin-Foust & Associates, Inc.

Dudek & Associates, Inc.

Entrix Environmental Consultants

Environ

Geosyntec Consultants

Impact Sciences, Inc.

Pacific Advanced Civil Engineering

Rodriguez Consulting, Inc.

URS Corporation

In general, the applicant prepared administrative draft analyses in consultation with both the Corps and CDFG, and with the assistance of various consultants under contract directly with applicant. The applicant's administrative drafts were then forwarded to and independently reviewed by the Corps, and CDFG with the assistance of various consultants under contract with CDFG, including the Aspen Environmental Group and legal counsel. Both the Corps and CDFG then developed the Draft EIS/EIR in close coordination with the applicant and various consultants through an iterative process over a number

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of years, a process that involved numerous visits to the Project site and the surrounding area, and multiple meetings attended by the Corps, and CDFG personnel and its consultants. Over the course of the document preparation process, the Corps and CDFG utilized their respective staff expertise in providing extensive review, oversight, and independent judgment and analysis of the Draft EIS/EIR. In addition, CDFG retained Aspen Environmental Group and legal counsel as independent third-party reviewers of the entire Draft EIS/EIR.