

D.5 Wilderness and Recreation

This section discusses the effects of the Proposed Project on recreation and wilderness areas (WAs). A recreation area is any site or facility that is used by the public for recreational activities. Recreation areas may include a national, State, county, or city park; refuge or preserve; open space; cultural center or museum; campground; significant ecological area; area of critical environmental concern (ACEC);¹ or a private recreational site such as a golf course. In contrast, WAs are specifically designated by Congress, and are managed as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Characteristically, WAs are undeveloped, primitive sites of at least 5,000 acres, and are designated to preserve their natural conditions and their inherent ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

D.5.1 Regional Setting and Approach to Data Collection

The Proposed Project and alternatives are located within or pass adjacent to recreation and WAs under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, National Park Service, State of California, Riverside County, and several cities. In order to gather information regarding the effects of the Proposed Project on WAs and recreational facilities, the CPUC and BLM contacted representatives from each of the affected jurisdictions. Field data were also collected to identify recreation and WAs along the Proposed Project and alternatives.² The locations of these recreation and WAs are shown in Figures D.5-1 through D.5-4 (see enclosed CD). The following discussion describes the WAs and recreation facilities that were identified within one mile of the Proposed Project route. Additional recreation and WAs that are located greater than one mile from the Proposed Project are listed for orientation purposes in the environmental setting sections, but are not considered in impact assessment.

D.5.2 Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project – Devers-Harquahala

The Devers-Harquahala portion of the Proposed Project is distinguished by a number of sensitive recreational resources. WAs, ACECs, a national wildlife refuge, a national park, a preserve, and State and county parks are all located within the vicinity of the proposed route.

Three ACECs would be traversed by the Devers-Harquahala portion of the Proposed Project, and one ACEC would be located adjacent to this portion of the Proposed Project. Although no WAs would be traversed by the Devers-Harquahala segment, seven WAs would be located adjacent to the route and its construction activities. The following sections provide further detailed information on each WA and ACEC along the proposed route.

¹ ACEC or “Areas of Critical Environmental Concern” are areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards (FLPMA Section 103 (a), 1976). An ACEC is an area under BLM management that is designated to protect important riparian corridors, threatened and endangered species habitat, cultural and archaeological resources, and unique scenic landscapes (Wikipedia, 2005).

² Data were collected during site visits conducted by Aspen Environmental Group on June 13-15, 2005; September 19-20, 2005; February 8, 2006.

D.5.2.1 Harquahala to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

The Harquahala to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) segment would be located approximately 140 feet south of the southeastern boundary of the Big Horn Mountains WA in Maricopa County, and approximately 1.4 miles north of the Eagletail Mountains WA in Maricopa and La Paz Counties (see Figure D.5-1 on the enclosed CD). The Proposed Project within this segment would also include the construction of a new telecommunications facility on Harquahala Mountain at Harquahala Peak, and near the Harquahala Mountains WA. One additional WA located further north of the Proposed Project would be the Hummingbird Springs WA. While the Harquahala to Kofa NWR segment is characterized by open space, no other recreational facilities have been established along this portion of the route.

The following is a description of the recreational facilities that would be located adjacent to the Proposed Project in this segment:

- **Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area.** This 21,000-acre wilderness area was designated by Congress in 1990, and is currently managed by the BLM, Phoenix Field Office. While no formal trails are established within the Big Horn Mountains WA, there are a number of primitive campsites. The wilderness area attracts hikers, backpackers, and rock climbers who can access the recreational area via unimproved dirt roads located along the northern, eastern, and western boundaries. Hummingbird Springs Wilderness Area is located north of Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area, but would not be immediately adjacent to the project (Wilderness, 2006a).
- **Hummingbird Springs Wilderness Area.** This 32,100-acre wilderness area was designated by Congress in 1990, and is currently managed by the BLM, Phoenix Field Office (Wilderness, 2006b). Recreationists are attracted to the 3,418-foot high Sugarloaf Mountain, which provides recreational opportunities to hikers, backpackers, and campers (BLM, 2005a).
- **Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area.** Congress designated this 97,880-acre wilderness area in 1990, which is managed by the BLM's Yuma Field Office. The Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area is characterized by several distinct rock strata and geologic features such as natural arches, high spires and monoliths, jagged sawtooth ridges, and six- to eight-mile washes that attract geologists. Rock climbers are also attracted to Courthouse Rock, a 1,000-foot granite monolith located near the northern border of the wilderness area (Wilderness, 2006c).
- **Harquahala Mountain Wilderness Area.** The 22,880-acre wilderness area was designated by Congress in 1990, and is currently managed by the BLM, Phoenix Field Office. The Harquahala Mountains Wilderness Area contains natural mountain springs that support rare habitat. The wilderness area also sustains the largest mule deer herd in western Arizona (Wilderness, 2006d).

Harquahala Peak. The 5,691-foot Harquahala Peak is the highest point in southwest Arizona (BLM, 2005b). Harquahala Peak and its recreational and historical resources are considered especially valuable by the BLM. The Harquahala Mountain Smithsonian Solar Observatory was constructed on the peak by the Smithsonian Institute in the 1920s, which is now included in a National Register Historic District. See Section D.7, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, for a detailed discussion of the cultural resources at Harquahala Peak. Visitors to the peak can visit the ruins of the observatory by way of the Harquahala Peak Pack Trail, a designated Millennium Trail (Ragsdale, 2006). Under the Millennium Trails Program established by President Clinton in 1999, a number of trails have been designated to “honor the past and imagine the future” as part of the nation’s legacy for the year 2000 (DOT, 2006). The Pack Trail was also designated a BLM Back Country Byway (a national program) in 2000. This BLM designation focuses on inviting the public to use vehicular means to tour scenic areas in remote places. The users prefer to keep roads like this one rough and

unimproved for the challenge, adventure, and primitive nature. In addition to being a nationally recognized Millennium Trail, the Historic Pack Trail is listed on the Arizona State Trails List. Other associated recreational amenities on the peak include picnic tables, benches, parking areas with barriers, fire rings, interpretive panels, trail heads, fencing, a restored historic structure, and equestrian facilities. The existing recreational facilities have been supported by two Heritage grants from Arizona State Parks to install interpretive developments and amenities for vehicle based recreation, including Arizona State Heritage funding for restoration and repair of the Historic Harquahala Peak Pack Trail. A Recreation Project Plan outlines the management objectives and implementation schedules for the recreational amenities on the Peak. A Cultural Resource Project Plan for the historic property outlines the formal management objectives, including BLM Use Allocations for public values, and lists the implementation schedule for the planned actions for restoration and interpretation.

Discussion of the recreational uses at the Kofa NWR is included below in Section D.5.2.2, Kofa NWR.

D.5.2.2 Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

This segment would be located approximately two miles south of the Kofa NWR's northern boundary, and would traverse the Kofa NWR for approximately 24 miles (see Figure D.5-1 on the enclosed CD). The Proposed Project would also be located adjacent to the southern boundary of the New Water Mountains WA and a northern portion of the Kofa WA, but would not be constructed within these WAs. The Kofa NWR segment is characterized by open space with Crystal Hill primitive campground located adjacent to the proposed route, and no additional recreational facilities are located within this segment.

The 1996 Kofa NWR and Wilderness and New Water Mountains Wilderness Interagency Management Plan describe the existing SCE DPV1 ROW that traverses the Kofa NWR in addition to the management guidelines that pertain to this corridor. Please see Section D.4.2.2, Land Use, for further discussion of these guidelines.

The following is a description of the recreational facilities that would be located adjacent to, or traversed by, the Proposed Project within this segment:

- **Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.** This area was first established as the Kofa Game Range in 1939 in order to allow for the recovery of declining bighorn sheep populations, and was jointly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Grazing Service. In 1946, the refuge was co-managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the newly established BLM, until Public Law 94-223 gave sole jurisdiction of the Kofa NWR to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 designated portions of the Kofa and New Water Mountains as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, which gave both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM a common legal mandate for managing these areas (BLM, USFWS, and AGFD, 1996).

Within the 665,400-acre Kofa NWR, 510,900 acres are designated as wilderness. According to the 1996 Kofa NWR and Wilderness and New Water Mountains Wilderness Interagency Management Plan, wildlife management is the primary function of the Kofa NWR with all other uses being secondary. The Plan estimates approximately 50,000 visitors enter the refuge each year. Recreational activities for these visitors include hunting, camping, rock climbing and rappelling, hiking, wildlife observation, photography, rockhounding, and sightseeing, in addition to environmental education activities (BLM, USFWS, and AGFD, 1996).

- **New Water Mountains Wilderness Area.** The 24,600-acre New Water Mountains Wilderness Area was designated by Congress in 1990, and is managed by the BLM, Yuma Field Office. Recreational activities in the New Water Mountains Wilderness Area include hunting, wildlife observation, hiking

and backpacking, camping, and rockhounding. Hikers and backpackers access various routes within the wilderness area that are closed to vehicles (Wilderness, 2006e). The presence of desert bighorn sheep and mule deer also attracts hunters to this recreational area (AZGFD, 2005). Approximately 500 visitors utilize the wilderness area annually (BLM, USFWS, and AGFD, 1996).

D.5.2.3 Kofa National Wildlife Refuge to Colorado River

The Kofa NWR to Colorado River segment traverses open space areas within La Paz County, Arizona, and would be constructed approximately five miles south of the La Posa Long Term Visitor Area (see Figure D.5-1 on the enclosed CD). The Proposed Project would also traverse Copper Bottom Pass. No additional recreational facilities would be located along this segment, although there is dispersed recreational use throughout the BLM lands west of the Kofa NWR.

The following is a description of the recreational facilities that would be located adjacent to, or traversed by, the Proposed Project within this segment:

- **La Posa Long Term Visitor Area.** The La Posa Long Term Visitor Area was created in 1983 to meet the needs of winter visitors and to protect the local desert ecosystem from overuse (BLM, 2005c). This 11,400-acre extended stay camping area is managed by the BLM, [Yuma Field Office](#). Facilities offered at the visitor area include primitive campgrounds and a recreational vehicle service (RV) site, restrooms, a dance floor, and a ramada.³ A number of recreational opportunities are also available to visitors of the La Posa Long Term Visitor Area, such as rockhounding, hiking, cultural sites, wildlife viewing, and hunting outside of the campground boundaries. The annual gem and mineral shows that are held in the Town of Quartzsite in January attract as many as 50,000 visitors to this recreational facility (PLIC, 2005).
- **Copper Bottom Pass.** Copper Bottom Pass is located adjacent to Copper Bottom Mine, and is surrounded by the Cunningham Mountains to the southwest, Sawtooth Mountains to the northwest, and La Cholla Mountains to the northeast. Located on BLM land, this pass is popular with backcountry recreationists.

D.5.2.4 Palo Verde Valley (Colorado River to Midpoint Substation)

This segment would cross the Colorado River and travel along the Palo Verde Valley area of Riverside County, California. Recreational uses within this segment are primarily found along the Colorado River, and include water-based activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming (see Figure D.5-2 on the enclosed CD). The following recreational facilities would be located nearest to this portion of the proposed route:

- **Goose Flats Wildlife Area.** The Goose Flats Wildlife Area is under the jurisdiction of Riverside County, and would be approximately 2.3 miles north of the Proposed Project along the Colorado River. Recreational activities at this 230-acre site include boating and fishing (SCE, 2005).
- **McIntyre Park.** McIntyre Park is currently operated by Destiny RV Resorts pursuant to a lease executed with the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (Riverside County Parks, 2004). This 87-acre site is located approximately one mile south of the Proposed Project, also along the Colorado River. Recreational facilities include tent and RV sites, boat launch, convenience store, and restrooms (Destiny McIntyre, 2003)

³ An open-air shade built of upright columns that are covered with a roof.

D.5.2.5 Midpoint Substation

The Midpoint Substation would be constructed west of the City of Blythe in an area of open space that is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#). The nearest recreation area would be the Mule Mountains ACEC, located approximately 1.3 miles west-southwest of the proposed substation. This 4,092-acre ACEC is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#) and is designated for its prehistoric values (BLM, 1999). Additional recreation areas that are located further from the proposed substation include the Goose Flats Wildlife Area and McIntyre Park to the east, and the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC to the west. See Section D.5.2.4 for a discussion of the Goose Flats Wildlife Area and McIntyre Park, and Section D.5.2.6 for a discussion of the Mule Mountains ACEC and the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC.

D.5.2.6 Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area

The Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment includes the greatest concentration of recreation and WAs along the entire Proposed Project. This segment would traverse the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC for approximately 1.3 miles and the Alligator Rock ACEC for approximately 6.8 miles. The Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment would also be located within one mile of the Mule Mountains ACEC, the Chuckwalla Mountains WA, the Orocopia Mountains WA, and the Mecca Hills WA to the south, and within one mile of Joshua Tree National Park to the north (see Figure D.5-2 on the enclosed CD). Additional recreation and WAs that are located further from the Proposed Project include the Palen/McCoy WA, Palen Dry Lake ACEC, and Desert Lily Preserve ACEC to the north, and the Little Chuckwalla Mountains WA and Corn Springs ACEC to the south. Recreational activities within this segment would also include off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of Powerline Road, which is a ROW access road located in the Shavers Valley area north of the Orocopia Mountains WA and northeast of the Mecca Hills WA. Following are descriptions of the recreational and WAs that would be located within one mile of the Proposed Project:

- **Mule Mountains ACEC.** The 4,092-acre Mule Mountains ACEC is located approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the Proposed Project. This ACEC is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#), and is designated for its prehistoric values (BLM, [19991980](#)).
- **Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC.** The 2,273-acre Chuckwalla Mountains ACEC would be traversed by the Proposed Project. This ACEC is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#), and is designated for its wildlife habitat (BLM, [19991980](#)).
- **Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Area.** The 84,614-acre Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Area was designated by Congress in 1994, and is managed by the BLM, California Desert District. The Proposed Project would travel outside of the northern boundary of this wilderness area. Recreational activities within this area include hiking, camping, and rock scrambling (Wilderness, 2006f).
- **Alligator Rock ACEC.** The 7,726 Alligator Rock ACEC would be traversed by the Proposed Project and is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#). It is designated for its archaeological values (BLM, [19991980](#)).
- **Joshua Tree National Park.** Congress changed the status of the Joshua Tree National Monument to a national park in October 1994 (National Park Service, 1997). The 794,000-acre Joshua Tree National Park is managed by the National Park Service, and the Proposed Project travels within 0.5 miles of the park's southern boundary. Recreational activities available at the park include backpacking, camping, mountain biking, rock climbing, geologic tours, birding, horseback riding, and star gazing (National Park Service, 2005).

- **Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Area.** The 45,927-acre Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Area was designated by Congress in 1994, and is managed by the BLM, California Desert District. The Proposed Project would travel within 0.5 miles of the wilderness area's northern boundary. Visitors to the Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Area are attracted to the prehistoric animal fossils and the trade routes used by Native Americans in this area (Wilderness, 2006g).
- **Mecca Hills Wilderness Area.** The 26,036-acre Mecca Hills Wilderness Area was designated by Congress in 1994, and is managed by the BLM, California Desert District. The Proposed Project would travel within one mile of the wilderness area's northern boundary. The Mecca Hills Wilderness Area is characterized by unique geologic formations created by the San Andreas Fault. Recreational activities at this wilderness area include hiking, camping, and cave exploring (Wilderness, 2006h).

Following are other recreational facilities and WAs that are located in the vicinity of the Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment, but greater than one mile away:

- Palen/McCoy Wilderness Area (Located 3.4 miles north of proposed Tower 2701 to Tower 2560. Accessed from Highway 177 and 4WD roads).
- Palen Dry Lake ACEC (Located two miles north of proposed Tower 2568 to Tower 2544. Accessed from Highway 177 and 4WD roads).
- Corn Springs ACEC (Located 3.7 miles south of proposed Tower 2536 to Tower 2519. Accessed from Corn Springs Rd.)
- Desert Lily Preserve ACEC (Located 5.3 miles north of Proposed Project. Accessed from Highway 177).

D.5.2.7 Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation

The Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segment would travel just outside of the southern and southwestern boundary of Joshua Tree National Park. The proposed route would traverse the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC for approximately two miles. The route would also travel less than one mile southwest of the Indio Hills Palms State Park. The Big Morongo Canyon ACEC would be located further north of the Proposed Project (see Figure D.5-2 on the enclosed CD).

The following is a description of the recreational and WAs that would be within one mile of the Proposed Project. See Section D.5.2.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, for a discussion of Joshua Tree National Park and the Mecca Hills WA.

- **Indio Hills Palms State Park.** The 2,206-acre Indio Hills Palms State Park is under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Parks and Recreation and is part of the adjacent Coachella Valley Preserve. While the nearest palm groves can be reached from a trailhead approximately four miles north of the City of Indio, there are currently no marked access roads to this park (CDPR, 2004).
- **Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Area of Critical Environmental Concern.** The Coachella Valley Preserve is a three-unit preserve system that totals over 20,000 acres. The Proposed Project would traverse the largest unit of approximately 17,000 acres. The preserve was established through a Habitat Conservation Plan in April 1986, and is collectively managed by the USFWS, BLM, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Center for Natural Lands Management, which is a nonprofit organization (CNLM, 2006). A portion of the preserve is the 11,631-acre Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC, which is designated for its wildlife habitat (BLM, 1999). Recreational facilities at the preserve include a visitor center and hiking trails.

One additional recreational facility is located in the vicinity of the Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segment, but greater than one mile away: the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC (located four miles north of Devers Substation. Accessed from Highway 62).

D.5.3 Environmental Setting for the Proposed Project – West of Devers

The West of Devers portion of the Proposed Project is more urbanized than the Devers-Harquahala portion. Recreational areas located within one mile of the proposed route would include ACECs, a national forest, a national scenic trail, and county and city parks. WAs along this portion of the route are located at a minimum of two miles north and south of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project would traverse a national scenic trail in addition to county and city recreational facilities. While one ACEC would be located adjacent to this portion of the project, none would be traversed by the route. The following sections provide further information on each recreational area along the West of Devers section of the project route.

D.5.3.1 Devers Substation to East Border of Banning

The Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment would travel south of the Whitewater Canyon ACEC and would cross the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). Additional recreation and WAs that are located further from the Proposed Project include the San Gorgonio WA to the north, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and the San Jacinto WA to the south, and the San Bernardino National Forest (SBNF) to the north and south (see Figure D.5-2 on the enclosed CD).

The following is a description of the recreational and WAs that would be within one mile of the Proposed Project:

- **Whitewater Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern.** The 16,381-acre Whitewater Canyon ACEC is located less than 0.5 miles north of the Proposed Project. This resource area is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#) and is designated for its wildlife habitat and Native American values (BLM, 1999).
- **Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.** The 2,650-mile PCT was designated by Congress in 1968 as one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System. Extending from Mexico to Canada, the PCT traverses the states of California, Oregon, and Washington and is limited to non-mechanized means of travel (PCT, 2005).
- **Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.** Located 0.6 miles south of proposed Tower 220 to Tower 239. Accessed from Highway 111 or Highway 243.

Following are the recreational facilities and WAs that are located in the vicinity of the Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment, but further than one mile from the corridor:

- San Gorgonio Wilderness Area (located two miles north of Proposed Project. Accessed from Whitewater Canyon Rd.)
- San Jacinto Wilderness Area (located three miles south of proposed Tower 220 to Tower 245. Accessed from Highway 111 or Highway 243)
- San Bernardino National Forest (located three miles south of proposed Tower 220 to Tower 256. Accessed from Highway 111 or Highway 243).

D.5.3.2 Banning and Beaumont

The Banning and Beaumont segment would travel south of the SBNF, north of Gilman Historic Ranch and the SCPGA Golf Club, and would traverse Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club for approximately 0.1 miles and two miles, respectively (see Figure D.5-3 on the enclosed CD). The Potrero ACEC would be located further south of the Proposed Project. No additional recreation or WAs would be located in the vicinity of the proposed route.

The following is a description of the recreational areas that would be within one mile of the Banning and Beaumont segment:

- **San Bernardino National Forest.** The SBNF was established in September 1925 by President Calvin Coolidge and is managed by the USDA Forest Service (USDA Forest Service, 2005a). The SBNF is located both north and south of I-10, and the Banning and Beaumont segment would travel within one mile of the northern portion of the SBNF. Recreational activities at the SBNF include hiking, camping, OHV use, skiing, fishing, and horseback riding (USDA Forest Service, 2006a).
- **Gilman Historic Ranch and Museum.** The Gilman Historic Ranch and Museum provides visitors with an interpretation of the history of California from the Cahuilla Indians to the exploration and settlement of southern California (Riverside County Parks, 2005). Recreational facilities include the Gilman homestead ranch in addition to historical and educational programs that attract visitors (Riverside County Parks, 2004).
- **Noble Creek Park.** The Noble Creek Park is managed by the Beaumont–Cherry Valley Recreation and Parks District and is located south of Noble Creek and north of Oak Valley Parkway. Noble Creek Park would be traversed by the Proposed Project. Recreational facilities at the park include sports fields, RV park, and restrooms (City of Beaumont, 2005).
- **Oak Valley Golf Club.** The Oak Valley Golf Club was opened in 1995 and operates as a semi-private club. In addition to providing golf facilities, single-family residences have also been incorporated into the Oak Valley Golf Club (Oak Valley Golf Club, 2003). The golf club extends west from Noble Creek to I-10 and would be traversed by the Proposed Project.
- **Southern California PGA Golf Club.** The 500-acre PGA Golf Club is owned and operated by the Southern California PGA. Recreational facilities such as a clubhouse and restaurants are available to visitors and members. Visitors are also attracted to the PGA championships that are often scheduled at the golf club (SCPGA, 2006).

The other recreational area that is located in the vicinity of the Banning and Beaumont segment, but is further than one mile away is the Potrero ACEC (located three miles south of Proposed Project and accessed from Highland Springs Ave.).

D.5.3.3 Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon

The Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon segment would traverse residential and open space areas within Riverside County, and would be constructed across the Norton Younglove Reserve for approximately 1.3 miles (see Figure D.5-3 on the enclosed CD). No additional recreational facilities would be located along this segment.

The 3,000-acre Norton Younglove Reserve is located within the San Timoteo Creek area between I-10 and State Route 60, and is managed by the County of Riverside. It would be traversed by Towers 152 to 155. The Riverside Land Conservancy is currently in the process of obtaining land in the vicinity of the

reserve, which will be transferred to the ownership of the California Department of Parks and Recreation in order to create the San Timoteo State Park. The future State park would encompass the existing Norton Younglove Reserve in addition to approximately 1,700 acres that have been identified for acquisition by the Conservancy (RLC, 2006). See Section F.2.4, Cumulative Impact Analysis for Wilderness and Recreation, for further discussion of the future recreational land uses in the San Timoteo Canyon area.

D.5.3.4 San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation

The San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation segment would traverse approximately 2.7 miles of open space in the City of Loma Linda, and approximately 0.6 miles of open space in the City of Colton. A number of riding and hiking trails are located within this open space. The City of Loma Linda adopted a riding and hiking trail plan in 1973, which includes the SCE easement and provides access to the trail system in the Badlands area (City of Loma Linda, 2004). The riding and hiking trail system is accessed via Mountain View Avenue, Richardson Street, and Oakwood Drive in the City of Loma Linda. Additional recreational activities that occur within the open space areas of the Cities of Loma Linda and Colton include OHV use. However, such OHV trails are informal, and have not been designated as a recreational use by the cities. No additional recreational facilities would be located along this segment.

D.5.3.5 San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation

The San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment would traverse approximately 0.4 miles of open space in the City of Loma Linda, passing through residential and industrial development as well as agricultural areas. It would be constructed approximately 0.1 miles east of Hulda Crooks Park (see Figure D.5-3 on the enclosed CD). See Section D.5.3.4, San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation, for a discussion of riding and hiking trails in the City of Loma Linda's open space areas. Additional recreation areas located further from the Proposed Project would include the Santa Ana River Wash ACEC, located approximately 2.9 miles northeast of San Bernardino Substation. No additional recreational facilities are located along this segment.

The 19.61-acre Hulda Crooks Park is located at the southern terminus of Mountain View Avenue, and is managed by the City of Loma Linda. The park is utilized by the adjacent residents within the City. Recreational facilities include playgrounds, barbeque pits, a sand volleyball court, an open field for sport activities, and restrooms (City of Loma Linda, 2003).

One additional recreational area is located in the vicinity of the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment: the Santa Ana River Wash ACEC (located 2.9 miles east of San Bernardino Substation and accessed from Orange St.).

D.5.4 Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards

The Proposed Project would traverse federal, State, and local jurisdictions that have implemented management plans for recreational resources. To determine the Proposed Project's consistency with these government plans and policies, a thorough review of all applicable policies was conducted. Appendix 2 lists all applicable federal, State, and local government policies that were identified for this project. While the Proposed Project is consistent with most agency policies, the Policy Screening Report (Appendix 2) identified some policies that required further consistency analysis. Any relevant recreation and wilderness policies that warranted further consideration have been carried forward for analysis in Sec-

tion D.5.6, Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project – Devers-Harquahala, and Section D.5.7, Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project – West of Devers. The discussion below summarizes the applicable land use regulations, plans, and policies.

Federal

The Proposed Project would traverse or be constructed adjacent to recreation or WAs that have been established by an Act of Congress. As such, the management of these areas is subject to the statutes set forth within each act. The following is a discussion of the Acts of Congress that would be applicable to the Proposed Project, and their requirements regarding transmission line projects.

Wilderness Act of 1964

WAs are designated by Congress under the authority of the Wilderness Act of 1964 as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and are managed by one of the following four land management agencies: BLM, USFWS, USDA Forest Service, or the National Park Service (Wilderness, 2006i). According to the Act, wilderness is defined as the following:

(c) A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this chapter an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. (Public Law 88-577, Section 2[c])

A number of uses are specifically prohibited within WAs. Prohibited uses include commercial enterprises; permanent and temporary roads (with exceptions for administration and emergency purposes); use of motorized vehicles, equipment, motorboats, or mechanical transport; landing of aircraft; or the erection of a structure or installation (Public Law 88-577, 88th Congress, Section 4[c]). However, the Act includes a special provision for the establishment of transmission lines ~~within~~across a WA that is located within a national forest. Section 4(d) provides the following text regarding these transmission lines:

Within wilderness areas in the national forests designated by this chapter, the President may, within a specific area and in accordance with such regulations as he may deem desirable, authorize prospecting for water resources, the establishment and maintenance of reservoirs, water-conservation works, power projects, transmission lines, and other facilities needed in the public interest, including the road construction and maintenance essential to development and use thereof, upon his determination that such use or uses in the specific area will better serve the interests of the United States and the people thereof than will its denial. (Public Law 88-577, Section 4[d])

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 [As Amended through Public Law 105-312, October 30, 1998]

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 was enacted to provide for the conservation, protection, and propagation of fish and wildlife and to consolidate the administration of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The 1966 Act was amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-57), and again by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-312). The general management strategy of the National Wildlife Refuge System is presented in Section 4[a], which states that a refuge will be managed in accordance with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as well as in accordance with the specific purpose of each refuge. In addition, priority consideration is given to “compatible” wildlife-dependent recreational uses in refuge planning and management (Public Law 106-580, Section 4[a][3]). “Compatible use” is defined in Section 5 of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1977 as “a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a refuge that, in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the System or the purposes of the refuge” (Public Law 105-57, Section 5[1]).

The Act provides the Secretary of the Interior with the discretion to permit a utility easement within a national wildlife refuge. Pursuant to subsection (d)(1)(B) of the Act, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to do the following:

Permit the use of, or grant easements in, over, across, upon, through, or under any areas within the System for purposes such as but not necessarily limited to, powerlines, telephone lines, canals, ditches, pipelines, and roads, including the construction, operation, and maintenance thereof, whenever he determines that such uses are compatible with the purposes for which these areas are established. (Public Law 106-580, Section 4[d][1][B])

While the Act permits a utility easement within a refuge, it also provides instruction for the method of payment that must be required by the Secretary of the Interior prior to granting an easement to any federal, State, local agency, or private individual (Public Law 106-580, Section 4 [d][2]).

Following the passage of the Act, the Kofa NWR was established in 1976 through ~~the Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988~~ (Public Law 94-223/100-696; 102 Stat 4571), which changed the status of this recreational resource from a game range (established in 1939) to a national wildlife refuge (USFWS, 2006). In addition, the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-628, 104 Stat 4472 and 4478) established portions of the Kofa and New Water Mountains as designated WAs (USFWS, 2006). Management of the Kofa NWR continues to be subject to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 and its subsequent amendments.

Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976

The designation of ACECs was authorized in Section 202 (c)(3) of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, and was designed to be used as a process for determining the special management required by certain environmental resources or hazards (BLM, 1999). According to Section 103(a) of the FLPMA, an ACEC is defined as the following:

An area within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. (BLM, 1999)

Prior to its designation, management prescriptions are developed for each proposed ACEC. These prescriptions are site-specific and include actions that the BLM has authority to carry out, as well as recommendations for actions that the BLM does not have direct authority to implement, such as cooperative agreements with other agencies and mineral withdrawals (BLM, 1999).

In addition to the above Acts of Congress, 12 federal management plans from the BLM, USDA Forest Service, USFWS, National Park Service, and the Department of Defense were evaluated for wilderness and recreation policies that would apply to the Proposed Project. Such plans included the Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan and Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan, California Desert Conservation Area Plan, Proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan, Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, and national monument, national park, and wildlife refuge management plans. As described in Appendix 2, the Proposed Project is consistent with these plans. However, a few policies from the following plans are evaluated further in Section D.5.6.1, Harquahala to Kofa NWR, to determine the project's impact on wilderness and recreation. These plans include:

- BLM Final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Area (1985). Further analysis was required to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with policies that address off-highway vehicle use.
- BLM Final Amendment and Environmental Assessment to the Lower North Management Framework Plan and the Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan (2000). Further analysis was required to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with policies that address off-highway vehicle use and wilderness area management.
- BLM California Desert Conservation Area Plan (1980). Further analysis was required to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with policies that address motorized vehicle use and the creation of new roads and right-of-ways.
- BLM Proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (2002). Further analysis was required to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with policies that address motorized vehicle access and the creation of new roads or off-highway vehicle routes.

State

One State plan was found to be applicable to the Proposed Project and was evaluated for wilderness and recreation policies. As described in Appendix 2, the Proposed Project is consistent with the policies of the California Recreational Trails Plan, and no further analysis of this plan was required.

Local

Appendix 2 identifies all wilderness and recreation policies that apply to the Proposed Project, which includes county and city general and comprehensive plans in addition to local area plans. Only the Riverside County Integrated Project 2002 General Plan listed a policy that was carried forward for analysis in Section D.5.6.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area. As such, the following plan is further considered for project consistency:

- Riverside County Integrated Project 2002 General Plan (2003). Further analysis was required to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with policies that address extension of utilities in Open Space–Conservation designated areas.

As presented in Appendix 2, all other local policies that are applicable to wilderness and recreation were found to be consistent with the Proposed Project.

D.5.5 Significance Criteria and Approach to Impact Assessment

This section explains how impacts are assessed in Section D.5, and Section D.5.5.1 presents the significance criteria on which impact determinations are based. In addition, Section D.5.5.2 lists the Applicant Proposed Measures (APMs) relevant to Section D.5, and Section D.5.5.3 lists all impacts identified for the Proposed Project and alternatives.

D.5.5.1 Significance Criteria

- The Proposed Project would directly or indirectly disrupt activities in established federal, State, or local recreation areas and/or wilderness areas.
- The Proposed Project would substantially reduce the scenic, biological, cultural, geologic, or other important factors that contribute to the value of federal, State, local, or private recreational facilities or wilderness areas.

D.5.5.2 Applicant Proposed Measures

APMs were identified by SCE in its CPCN Application to the CPUC. Table D.5-1 presents the APMs that are relevant to this section. Impact analysis assumes that all APMs will be implemented as defined in the table; additional mitigation measures are recommended in this section if it is determined that APMs do not fully mitigate the impacts for which they are presented.

Table D.5-1. Applicant Proposed Measures – Wilderness and Recreation

APM No.	Description
B-3	Vehicular travel must be on established roads to the maximum extent practicable. Any off-road vehicle use should be strongly discouraged. This will benefit many of the species covered by the [Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation] plan. (SCE)
L-1	Impacts in crossing of the KOFA NWR (Link 2) would be minimized through utilization of existing utility access (gas and transmission) roads during the construction and operational phases of the project. All vehicular traffic would be limited to approved access or spur roads. (SCE) ¹
L-3	New access road construction will be kept to a minimum. (BLM B 1.2)
L-9	Link 100 crosses the Pacific Crest National <u>Scenic</u> Trail, causing a potential temporary impact during construction. Temporary impacts also may occur where Link 102 crosses Noble Creek Regional Park and the Oak Valley Golf Course. Mitigation for construction includes avoiding high use periods and holidays. Mitigation for operation would require construction using structures placed parallel to existing structures to span and avoid displacement of recreational facilities. (SCE)

¹ Reference in parentheses denotes the origin of the APM. "(SCE)" is a Proponent's mitigation measure. "(BLM)" is a Proponent's measure derived from a requirement in the 1989 BLM Right-of-Way Grant for the DPV2 project. Numbers such as B 4.1 refer to the specific BLM measure in the 1989 ROW Grant.

D.5.5.3 Impacts Identified

As a whole, the Proposed Project would significantly impact recreation and WAs located along the project route. In particular, the Proposed Project would create significant but mitigable (Class II) and less than significant (Class III) impacts on WAs located within Maricopa County, Arizona; significant but mitigable (Class II) impacts on recreation areas located within San Bernardino County, California; and significant (Class I), significant but mitigable (Class II), and less than significant (Class III) impacts in La Paz County, Arizona, and Riverside County, California. Recreation resources that would be traversed by the project would be significantly impacted during construction due to preclusion of access and other

construction-related impacts (i.e., noise, dust). Operation of the Proposed Project would also significantly impact some recreation areas by intensifying the industrial uses that are located within these resources, thereby altering their character and recreational value. Mitigation Measures have been proposed in this section to reduce these potentially significant (Class II) impacts to less than significant levels. However, significant Class I impacts would continue to occur within the following recreation areas: Harquahala Peak, Kofa NWR, the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, and the Alligator Rock ACEC, ~~and the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe Toed Lizard ACEC.~~

Table D.5-2 lists the impacts identified for the Proposed Project and alternatives, along with the significance of each impact. Impacts are classified as Class I (significant, cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant), Class II (significant, can be mitigated to a level that is less than significant), Class III (adverse, but less than significant), and Class IV (beneficial). Detailed discussions of each impact and the specific locations where each is identified are presented in the following sections.

Table D.5-2. Impacts Identified – Wilderness and Recreation

Impact No.	Description	Impact Significance
Proposed Project		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class I
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	Class II
SCE Harquahala-West Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	No Impact
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	No Impact
SCE Palo Verde Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	No Impact
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	No Impact
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	No Impact
Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	No Impact
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	No Impact
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	No Impact
Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class I
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	Class II

Table D.5-2. Impacts Identified – Wilderness and Recreation

Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class III
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class III
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	No Impact
Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class I
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	Class II
Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class I
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	Class II
Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative		
WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas.	Class II
WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value.	Class I
WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities.	Class II

Consistency with Plans and Policies

As noted in the Environmental Setting, Sections D.5.2 and D.5.3, the Proposed Project traverses recreational resources under the jurisdiction of the BLM, USFWS, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Riverside County, and numerous cities. Plans were reviewed that address these jurisdictions to determine if there were any recreational or wilderness policies that would apply to the construction and operation of the Proposed Project. The Policy Screening Report (Appendix 2) evaluated all applicable policies associated with the Proposed Project and identified policies that required further evaluation.

The Proposed Project may require OHV use of equipment associated with construction activities, which is restricted by the BLM in certain recreation and WAs, and within ACECs. While OHV use would occur only during project construction, the development of new access or spur roads could become future OHV trails if they are not managed properly. In addition, construction equipment may preclude the use of existing trails during construction of the Proposed Project. Table D.5-3 lists the Arizona and California BLM policies that pertain to OHV use, and discusses the APMs that would be implemented to avoid impacts. Overall, the Proposed Project would not conflict with BLM policies that manage WAs and ACECs.

The Proposed Project would also be constructed across designated Open Space–Conservation and Open Space–Conservation–Habitat within portions of unincorporated Riverside County. According to the county’s area plans, the project route would traverse the aforementioned designations within the following segments:

Devers–Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project
D.5 WILDERNESS AND RECREATION

- Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area (Riverside County, 2003a);
- Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation (Riverside County, 2003a and 2003b);
- Devers Substation to East Border of Banning (Riverside County, 2003b); and
- Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon (Riverside County, 2003c).

Table D.5-3 lists the Riverside County policy that pertains to the expansion of utilities within Open Space–Conservation designations. Overall, the Proposed Project would not conflict with Riverside County policies.

Table D.5-3. Consistency with Applicable Wilderness and Recreation Plans and Policies

Agency Regulating Land Use	Regulation or Policy	Project Consistent?	Basis for Consistency
Bureau of Land Management	Final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Area (1985)		
<i>Applicable Segments: Harquahala to Kofa NWR, Kofa NWR to Colorado River</i>	<p>Management Guidance Common to all Alternatives:</p> <p>Off-Road Vehicle Use. Limitations on or closure of public lands to motorized off-road vehicle use will be established for specific roads, trails, or areas where problems are identified. The following criteria would be considered before restricting or closing any area to off-road vehicle use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to promote user enjoyment and minimize use conflicts • the need to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resource values • the need to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant degradation of wildlife habitats • the need to promote user safety. 	Yes	The purpose of this policy is to restrict recreational off-highway vehicle use. SCE's implementation of APM B-3 and L-3 would minimize project associated off-highway vehicle use or the creation of new roads.
Bureau of Land Management	Final Amendment and Environmental Assessment to the Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan and the Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan (2000)		
<i>Applicable Segments: Harquahala to Kofa NWR, Kofa NWR to Colorado River</i>	<p>Recreation Management – Component One:</p> <p>Maintain current vehicle management guidance specified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permitting cross-country vehicle travel only when specifically authorized to complete a task which requires such use, and only in areas where such use will not cause unnecessary or undue resource impacts; and • retaining all congressionally declared wildernesses as closed to mechanical use. 	Yes	The Proposed Project would not be constructed within a WA. As SCE must obtain a right-of-way grant from the Bureau of Land Management, no new roads would be created on Bureau of Land Management lands without prior approval. In addition, SCE would implement APM B-3, which would minimize off-highway vehicle use.

Table D.5-3. Consistency with Applicable Wilderness and Recreation Plans and Policies

Agency Regulating Land Use	Regulation or Policy	Project Consistent?	Basis for Consistency
Bureau of Land Management <i>Applicable Segments:</i> <i>Palo Verde Valley, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation</i>	The California Desert Conservation Area Plan (1980; as amended 1999)		
	Multiple-Use Class Guidelines	Yes	Motorized-vehicle access or transportation resulting from the Proposed Project would serve project construction and operation activities that would be previously approved in a right-of-way grant issued by the Bureau of Land Management. As such, no motorized-vehicle access or new road construction would occur on Bureau of Land Management land without prior approval from this agency. SCE would also implement APM L-3 that would minimize the construction of new roads. With prior Bureau of Land Management approval, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the Multiple-Use Class Guidelines for Motorized-Vehicle Access or Transportation.
	14. Motorized-Vehicle Access/Transportation		
	Class C – Motorized-vehicle use is generally not allowed unless provided for in individual wilderness legislation and management plans or if necessary to serve valid existing rights, and for emergency use for public safety, or protection of wilderness values.		
Class L – New roads and ways may be developed under right-of-way grants or pursuant to regulations or approved plans of operation. Motorized vehicle use will be allowed on existing routes of travel until designation of routes is accomplished. [#3, 1982]			
	Class M – Motorized-vehicle use will be allowed on “existing” routes of travel unless closed or limited by the authorized officer. New routes may be allowed upon approval of the authorized officer [#3, 1982].		
	Class I – Same as Class M. In addition, the vehicle open areas are available for unrestricted vehicle access except where private land, ACECs, and active mining areas are included [#3, 1982].		
Bureau of Land Management <i>Applicable Segments:</i> <i>Palo Verde Valley, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation</i>	Proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan, an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980 and Sikes Act Plan with the California Department of Fish and Game, and Final Environmental Impact Statement (2002)		
	Land Ownership Pattern Goals and Objectives: Provide for constrained motorized vehicle access in a manner that balances the needs of all desert users, private landowners, and other public agencies.	Yes	SCE would implement APM B-3 and L-3, which would minimize off-highway vehicle use and the creation of new roads. Additionally, SCE must obtain a right-of-way grant from the Bureau of Land Management, and as such, no new roads would be created on Bureau of Land Management lands without prior approval.
	Land Ownership Pattern Goals and Objectives: When designating or amending areas or routes for motorized vehicle access, to the degree possible, avoid adverse impacts to desert resources.	Yes	SCE would implement APM B-3 and L-3, which would minimize off-highway vehicle use and the creation of new roads. Additionally, SCE must obtain a right-of-way grant from the Bureau of Land Management, and as such, no new roads would be created on Bureau of Land Management lands without prior approval.

Table D.5-3. Consistency with Applicable Wilderness and Recreation Plans and Policies

Agency Regulating Land Use	Regulation or Policy	Project Consistent?	Basis for Consistency
Riverside County	Riverside County Integrated Project 2002 General Plan (2003)		
<i>Applicable Segments: Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation, Devers Substation to East Border of Banning, Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon</i>	Open Space, Parks and Recreation OS 20.2: Prevent unnecessary extension of public facilities, services, and utilities, for urban uses, into Open Space–Conservation designated areas. (AI 74)	Yes	The Proposed Project would be constructed within an existing transmission line right-of-way in Riverside County. Any expansion of the right-of-way that may occur in the County would not preclude existing use of open space areas.

Source: BLM, 1985; BLM, 1999; BLM, 2000a; BLM, 2002; Riverside County, 2003d.

D.5.6 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project – Devers-Harquahala

This section presents discussion of impacts and mitigation measures for the 500 kV portion of the DPV2 Project. The discussion is divided into six geographic areas, three in Arizona and three in California. Within each area, both construction impacts and operational impacts are addressed.

D.5.6.1 Harquahala to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The nearest WAs to the Proposed Project would be the Big Horn Mountains WA, located approximately 140 feet north of the project route, and the Harquahala Mountains WA (which is located a few feet to the east and extending north to south across the summit of the mountain) northeast of the proposed telecommunications facility. The telecommunications facility component of the project would require the construction of a new building and radio tower approximately 35 feet south of the existing telecommunication structures that are operated by the Central Arizona Project (CAP). The proposed telecommunications site would also be located approximately 50 feet east of the Harquahala Peak Pack Trail, and approximately 100 feet north of the former Smithsonian Observatory. SCE’s proposed construction laydown area for the telecommunications facility would be located at the Eagle Eye Staging Area and Camp that was constructed and funded as part of the same project as the Harquahala Mountain interpretive facilities and associated amenities. In addition, this area is currently an existing gravel parking lot that serves as the trailhead for the Harquahala Peak Pack Trail. The Eagle Eye Staging Area and Camp facility features a large parking area for trailers, loading dock for ATV use, bathrooms, ramada with interpretive and informational signs.

Project construction activities would require the use of roads that serve as primary access to the aforementioned recreational areas. No information regarding the number of annual visitors to Harquahala Peak and the WAs is readily available. However, visitors would access these resources via I-10, frontage

roads (i.e., Eagle Eye Road, Palomas-Harquahala Road), and the Harquahala Peak Pack Trail. Harquahala Peak Road (the only road with vehicular access to the Peak) is a very rough, narrow, road that requires the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles. This 10.5-mile road consists of steep, rugged sections, and has a series of switchbacks near the top.

Use of the laydown area and access roads for construction activities associated with the proposed telecommunications facility at Harquahala Peak would preclude access for visitors to the WAs and to the recreational facilities at Harquahala Peak. This preclusion would result from the temporary closure facilities and roads for construction activities, and would create a potentially significant recreation impact (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources during construction along the Harquahala to Kofa NWR segment would be reduced to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area), and Mitigation Measure C-1g (Minimize Impacts at Harquahala Peak) presented in Section D.7 (Cultural and Paleontological Resources). Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area) would minimize impacts to recreationists during peak periods, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities. Mitigation Measure C-1g (Minimize Impacts at Harquahala Peak) is intended to ensure SCE's extensive consultation with the BLM Phoenix Area Office to define and implement the most effective actions to reduce the impacts of the proposed telecommunications tower at Harquahala Peak.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.** No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate construction activities and the project construction schedule with the authorized officer of the recreation areas listed below. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officer. SCE shall locate construction equipment to avoid temporary preclusion of recreation areas per the recommendations of the authorized officer. SCE shall also prepare a public notice of construction activities consistent with Mitigation Measure L-1a (Prepare Construction Notification Plan). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer, and provide this documentation to the CPUC and the BLM 30 days prior to construction.

- Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area
- Harquahala Mountains Wilderness Area
- Harquahala Peak
- Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area
- San Jacinto Wilderness Area
- Kofa National Wildlife Refuge
- Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument
- San Bernardino National Forest
- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
- Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- Alligator Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- Potrero Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- BLM off-highway vehicle trails in Shavers Valley
- Indio Hills Palms State Park
- Norton Younglove Reserve
- Noble Creek Park
- Hulda Crooks Park
- Oak Valley Golf Club
- City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system
- [San Timoteo State Park](#)

C1-g **Minimize impacts at Harquahala Peak.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

The proposed 500 kV transmission line would be located within an existing utility corridor, and the proposed telecommunications facility would be located adjacent to existing radio towers. The proposed 500 kV transmission line component of the Harquahala to Kofa NWR segment would not be located within or across a recreation or WA. The proposed telecommunications component would require the construction of an approximately 400-square-foot facility in addition to an 110-foot radio tower on a total of 0.25 acres. Construction of this facility would increase the total amount of industrial development on the Harquahala Mountain. As the Harquahala Mountains WA is located a few feet to the east and extends north to south across the summit of the mountain, visitors to the WA would be able to see this increase in development from vantage points within the WA (see Section D.3.6.1, Visual Resources). In addition, the proposed telecommunication facility will have a significant indirect effect on the Solar Observatory as a visual intrusion. The proposed facility is approximately 100 feet north of the Solar Observatory and would be within line of sight of the Observatory, which is the focus of public interpretive signage. Harquahala Peak has been designated as a communication site and there is an existing CAP facility on the peak, including a microwave repeater and solar panels located 35 feet beyond the proposed location of the new SCE telecommunications facility. In addition, the BLM recently distributed the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft EIS for public comment, which proposes an ACEC designation for Harquahala Mountain. See Appendix 2, Policy Screening Report for a brief description of these plans. Implementation of the telecommunications facility resulting from operation of the Proposed Project would permanently diminish the character of Harquahala Peak and the Harquahala Mountains WA. Overall, Proposed Project operation would significantly change the character of recreational resources along the Harquahala to Kofa NWR segment or diminish their recreational value, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I). However, Mitigation Measure C-1g (Minimize impacts at Harquahala Peak) is presented (in Section D.7, Cultural and Paleontological Resources) in an effort to minimize the impact through evaluation and implementation of one of several options to define and implement the most effective actions to reduce the impacts of the proposed telecommunications tower at Harquahala Peak.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value

C-1g Minimize impacts at Harquahala Peak.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

Although the Proposed Project would diminish the value of recreational resources significantly within the Harquahala to Kofa NWR segment (see Impact WR-1, above), implementation of project components would not permanently preclude the existing recreational activities along this segment. The location of the Proposed Project components would be adjacent to existing utility structures (i.e., DPV1 500 kV transmission line, CAP telecommunication facilities). As such, the locations where the Proposed Project components would be sited are not currently used for recreation activities. No operational impacts associated with permanent preclusion of recreational activities would occur.

D.5.6.2 Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

As discussed in Section D.5.2.2, Kofa NWR, the existing SCE ROW that traverses this segment is located across the Kofa NWR and outside of the New Water Mountains WA. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this ROW, and construction activities would not occur within the New Water Mountains or the Kofa WAs. No impacts to these WAs would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, impacts would occur to the Kofa NWR. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts along the Kofa NWR segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed approximately 24 miles across the Kofa NWR. As described in Section D.5.2.2, Kofa NWR, the refuge is used for a number of recreational activities, and attracts approximately 50,000 visitors annually.

Project construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the Kofa NWR. For example, the noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of the recreation area. Recreationists may be less likely to visit this resource during project construction. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to Kofa NWR due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Kofa NWR would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). This mitigation measure would minimize impacts to recreationists at the Kofa NWR during peak periods, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

The Proposed Project would create a new 500 kV transmission line across 24 miles of the Kofa NWR. Although this component of the project would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV line (DPV1), the amount of industrial development that traverses the refuge would be intensified as a result of the Proposed Project by siting a new 500 kV transmission line next to an existing 500 kV transmission line. As described in Section D.5.2.2, Kofa NWR, the refuge is used by recreationists for camping, rock climbing and rappelling, hiking, wildlife observation, photography, and sightseeing. Many of these recreational activities are popular because of the natural setting and undeveloped landscape that characterizes the majority of the refuge. The existing DPV1 transmission line has already introduced an indus-

trial component to the land use across the refuge. While the Proposed Project would not introduce a new industrial use across an undeveloped recreation area, it would intensify the industrial nature of the ROW through the construction and operation of new towers and spur roads across the refuge. The proposed transmission towers are large structures, approximately 150 feet in height. Given the substantial size of these structures and their industrial appearance, the proposed transmission towers would contrast with the natural landscape of the refuge. New towers would be constructed across 24 miles of Kofa NWR, and as such, the Proposed Project would significantly increase the total amount of industrial development within the refuge, further degrading its landscape and character. As discussed in Section D.3.6.2, Visual Resources, long-term, operational visual impacts would be experienced by travelers and recreationists accessing the refuge on Pipeline Road and Crystal Hill Road. Overall, development and operation of the project would change the character of the Kofa NWR and would significantly diminish its recreational value. Impacts to the Kofa NWR would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). In response to an agency comment from the USFWS (USFWS, 2006), Mitigation Measure WR-2a (Coordinate with USFWS to improve impacted areas within Kofa National Wildlife Refuge) has been proposed to minimize the loss of a recreational resource associated with the project. However, despite implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-2a, impacts to the recreational value of the Kofa NWR would remain significant.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value

WR-2a Coordinate with USFWS to improve impacted areas within Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. SCE shall coordinate with the USFWS to improve impacted areas within the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The implementation of improvements would be conducted at the discretion of the authorized officer for the Kofa NWR, and may include the acquisition of private land in-holdings from willing sellers within the refuge boundaries, and the rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites and old roads within the refuge. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer of the Kofa NWR, and must demonstrate that negotiations and subsequent improvements have been conducted to the satisfaction of the USFWS. Documentation shall be submitted to the CPUC and the BLM at least 30 days prior to operation of the project.

~~No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Proposed Project across the Kofa NWR.~~

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line across the Kofa NWR. As the project would be constructed across a recreation area, impacts would occur to recreational resources located adjacent to the ROW. For example, hiking trails that pass under or along the ROW would be impacted if a new transmission tower were erected on the trail. The construction of new spur roads would also affect recreational resources (e.g., trails, campgrounds) that are traversed by or located adjacent to the Proposed Project. As such, the siting of new transmission towers or spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the refuge. Impacts to existing recreational resources resulting from siting new towers or roads on or near these resources would be potentially significant (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational activities at Kofa NWR would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area). A form of this mitigation measure was originally included as a permit requirement by BLM for SCE's 1989 permit.

While SCE commits to limiting vehicular traffic to approved access or spur roads in APM L-1, Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area) presents additional detail. Therefore, APM L-1 is superseded by Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a **Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**
Where the proposed route crosses the recreation areas listed below, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer to determine specific tower site and spur road locations in order to minimize impacts to recreational resources. This coordination shall occur no less than 30 days prior to the start of construction. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer and shall submit this documentation to the CPUC and the BLM prior to initiating project construction.

- Kofa National Wildlife Refuge
- Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument
- San Bernardino National Forest
- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
- San Jacinto Wilderness Area
- Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC
- Alligator Rock ACEC
- Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC
- Potrero ACEC
- Norton Younglove Reserve

D.5.6.3 Kofa National Wildlife Refuge to Colorado River

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (No Impact)

The Proposed Project would not be constructed across established recreational facilities or WAs within the Kofa NWR to Colorado River segment. The nearest recreational facility to the Proposed Project would be the La Posa Long Term Visitor Area, located approximately five miles north of the project route. Project construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to the visitor area. The construction of the proposed 500 kV transmission line would not reduce access or visitation to the La Posa Long Term Visitor Area. Although the project would traverse Copper Bottom Pass, it would be located in an existing ROW. Construction activities would occur along existing access roads, and as such, would not temporarily reduce access or preclude recreational use of the pass. No impacts to established recreation or wilderness areas would occur during construction of the project.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The proposed 500 kV transmission line would be located within an existing utility corridor and would not traverse established recreation facilities or WAs. As the Proposed Project would be constructed adjacent to existing utility uses, the project would not change the character of a recreational resource. Although backcountry recreationists utilize Copper Bottom Pass, this is not a designated recreational resource subject to special management guidelines by the BLM. Use of the pass would not be affected during operation of the Proposed Project. Overall, the project would not impact an established recreation facility, nor would it diminish the value of a recreation or WA. No impacts would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The Proposed Project would not be located across established recreation facilities or WAs within this segment. The location of the Proposed Project components would be adjacent to existing utility structures (i.e., 500 kV transmission line and towers). As such, the sites for the Proposed Project components are not currently used for recreation, and operation of the project would not preclude recreational activities. The Proposed Project would not impact recreational activities along the Kofa NWR to Colorado River segment. No operational impacts to recreational activities would occur.

D.5.6.4 Palo Verde Valley (Colorado River to Midpoint Substation)

Impact WR-1: Construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (No Impact)

The Proposed Project would not be constructed across recreation or WAs within the Palo Verde Valley segment. The nearest recreational facilities to the Proposed Project would be McIntyre Park and Goose Flats Wildlife Area, located approximately one mile south and 2.3 miles north of the project route, respectively. Project construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to these recreational facilities. The construction of the proposed 500 kV transmission line would not temporarily reduce access or visitation to the park or wildlife area. No impacts to these facilities would occur during construction of the project. No other recreation or WAs would be located adjacent to the Proposed Project along this segment, and as such, no construction-related impacts would occur to recreational facilities.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The proposed 500 kV transmission line would be located within an existing utility corridor and would not traverse recreation or WAs in this segment, and as such would not change the character of a recreational resource. No recreational resources are located adjacent to the ROW, and as such, the project would not diminish the value of a recreation or WA. No impacts would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The Proposed Project would not be located across existing recreation or WAs within this segment. The location of the Proposed Project components would be adjacent to existing utility structures (i.e., 500 kV transmission line and towers). The sites for the Proposed Project components are not currently used for recreation and operation of the project would not preclude recreational activities. The Proposed Project would not impact recreational activities along the Palo Verde Valley segment. No operational impacts to recreational activities would occur.

D.5.6.5 Midpoint Substation

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (No Impact)

The Proposed Project would not be constructed across recreation or WAs at the proposed Midpoint Substation site. The nearest recreation or WA would be the Mule Mountains ACEC, located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the proposed substation. Substation construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to this ACEC. The construction of the proposed Midpoint Substation would not temporarily reduce access or visitation to the ACEC. No impacts to the Mule Mountains ACEC would occur during construction of the project. No other recreation or WAs would be located adjacent to the proposed substation, and as such, no construction-related impacts would occur to recreational facilities.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The proposed Midpoint Substation would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line and would not be sited within a recreation or WA. Therefore, the project would not change the character of, or impact the recreational value of, a recreational resource or WA. No operational impacts to the character or value of a recreation or WA would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The proposed site of the Midpoint Substation would not be located on or across existing recreation or WAs. The proposed substation would be adjacent to existing agricultural land uses and open space. The nearest recreational areas are located more than one mile away from the site. Also, the Midpoint Substation site currently is not used for recreation, and operation of the substation would not preclude recreational activities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not impact recreational activities at Midpoint Substation. No operational impacts to recreational activities would occur.

D.5.6.6 Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area

As discussed in Section D.5.2.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, the existing SCE ROW traverses the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and the Alligator Rock ACEC. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this ROW. Additional recreation and WAs are located within one mile of the Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment, including the Mule Mountains ACEC, the Chuckwalla Mountains WA, the Orocopia Mountains WA, the Mecca Hills WA, and Joshua Tree National Park. None of the aforementioned recreation areas would be traversed by the Proposed Project, nor would construction activities occur within these areas. As a result, no impacts to these recreation and WAs would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, impacts would occur to the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and the Alligator Rock ACECs. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts along the Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed for approximately 1.3 miles across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and approximately for 6.8 miles across the Alligator Rock ACEC. As described in the Environmental Setting (Section D.5.2.5), the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and the Alligator Rock ACEC are recreational resources that are managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#), and are designated for their wildlife habitat and archaeological values, respectively.

Project construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would temporarily diminish the value of the ACECs. For example, the noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of these recreation areas. Recreationists may be less likely to visit these resources during project construction. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. In the Shavers Valley area, OHV use occurs along Powerline Road, which would be used by SCE to access the Proposed Project site during construction. If construction equipment were to block OHV access of this road, recreationists would utilize illegal routes or create new routes to avoid this equipment. Such a disturbance to recreational resources would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, the Alligator Rock ACEC, and OHV use along Powerline Road would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). This mitigation measure would minimize impacts to recreationists and recreational resources, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

The Proposed Project would result in the presence of a new 500 kV transmission line across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and the Alligator Rock ACEC. Although this component of the project would be located adjacent to an existing utility line, the amount of industrial development that traverses each ACEC would be intensified as a result of the Proposed Project. As described in Section D.5.4, Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards, ACECs are designated to protect and prevent damage to historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural processes. The value of the resources that are protected within the Alligator Rock and Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACECs is partly determined by the natural setting and undeveloped landscape that characterizes the majority of the ACECs, in addition to the archaeology and wildlife habitat for which each ACEC was designated. The existing DPV1 transmission line has already introduced an industrial land use across the ACECs. While the Proposed Project would not introduce a new industrial use across an undeveloped recreational resource, it would intensify the industrial nature of the ROW through the construction and operation of new towers and spur roads across the ACECs. As stated previously, 500 kV transmission

towers are approximately 150 feet in height. Given the substantial size of these structures and their industrial appearance, the proposed transmission towers would contrast with the natural landscape of the ACECs. New towers would be constructed across 1.3 miles of the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and 6.8 miles of the Alligator Rock ACEC, and as such, the Proposed Project would significantly increase the total amount of industrial development within the ACECs, further degrading their landscape and character. In its discussion of the Alligator Rock ACEC, Section D.3.6.6, Visual Resources, states that a new transmission line would also increase the structural complexity and industrial character visible from the several access roads within the Alligator Rock ACEC. Overall, development and operation of the project would change the character of the ACECs and would significantly diminish their recreational value. Impacts to the Alligator Rock and Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACECs would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Proposed Project across the Alligator Rock and Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACECs.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and the Alligator Rock ACEC. Recreational resources that are located in the vicinity of the existing utility ROW would be affected by the collocation of a second 500 kV transmission line. The location of new transmission towers or spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and the Alligator Rock ACECs. As such, the siting of new towers or spur roads within these resources would create potentially significant impacts (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and the Alligator Rock ACECs would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities at ACECs along the Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area segment

WR-3a Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

D.5.6.7 Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation

As discussed in Section D.5.2.7, Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation, the existing SCE ROW traverses the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC, and travels within one mile of Indio Hills Palms State Park. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this ROW. Additional recreation and WAs are located further from the Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segment, which would include Joshua Tree National Park and the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC. Neither of these recreation areas would be traversed by the Proposed Project, nor would construction activities occur within these areas. In addition, no recreational resources would be located in the vicinity of Devers Substation, and as such, project components associated with the substation would not impact any recreation and WAs. No impacts to Joshua Tree National Park or the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, impacts would occur to the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC, and the Indio Hills Palms State Park. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts along the Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation segment of the Proposed Project would be constructed less than one mile southwest of the Indio Hills Palms State Park, and approximately two miles across the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. As described in the Environmental Setting (Section D.5.2.6), these recreational resources were designated for their wildlife habitat and continue to attract recreationists.

Project construction activities would create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the State park, the ACEC, and preserve. The noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of these recreation areas. Recreationists may be less likely to visit these resources during project construction. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. For example, the State park is accessed through a trailhead located approximately four miles north of the City of Indio. Project construction activities may require the use of the primary access roads that serve the State park. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to the State park, the preserve, and the ACEC due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Indio Hills Palms State Park or the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). This mitigation measure would minimize construction impacts to recreationists at the State park, the preserve, and the ACEC, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class III)

The Proposed Project would add a new 500 kV transmission line within an existing corridor across the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. Although this component of the project would be located adjacent to existing utility lines, the amount of industrial development that traverses approximately two miles of the preserve and ACEC would be intensified as a result of the Proposed Project. The proposed 500 kV transmission towers are approximately 150 feet in height and would contrast with the natural landscape of the preserve and ACEC. However, the Proposed Project would be constructed adjacent to three existing lattice tower transmission lines, and as such, the project would not significantly degrade the landscape or character of the preserve and ACEC. As discussed in Section D.3.6.7, Visual Resources, the Proposed Project would not dominate the view, or attract the attention of the casual observer within the Coachella Valley Preserve. Overall, development and operation of the project would not significantly change the character of this recreational resource nor would it significantly diminish its recreational value. Impacts to the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC would be adverse but less than significant, and no mitigation is required (Class III).

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line across the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. Recreational resources that are located in the vicinity of the existing utility ROW would be affected by the collocation of a second 500 kV transmission line. The location of new transmission towers or spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. As such, the siting of new towers or spur roads within these resources would create potentially significant impacts (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a **Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

D.5.7 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Project – West of Devers

D.5.7.1 Devers Substation to East Border of Banning

As discussed in Section D.5.3.1, Devers Substation to East Border of Banning, the existing SCE ROW crosses the PCT. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this ROW. Additional recreation and WAs are located further from the Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment, which would include the San Gorgonio WA, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, the San Jacinto WA, and the SBNF. None of these recreation areas would be traversed by the Proposed Project, nor would construction activities occur within these areas. As a result, no impacts to the aforementioned recreation and WAs would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, short-term impacts would occur to the PCT. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts to the PCT within the Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would cross the PCT as the trail traverses unincorporated Riverside County land north of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. As described in Section D.5.3.1, the PCT was designated as one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System, and is limited to non-mechanized means of travel.

As it crosses the PCT, the Proposed Project would remove existing single-circuit 230 kV towers and construct new double-circuit 230 kV towers. The nearest transmission towers would include one double-circuit tower approximately 280 feet east of the trail, and two double-circuit towers approximately 210 feet and 280 feet west of the trail, respectively. These new towers would be constructed at the same sites as existing single-circuit towers. Although no new tower locations would be introduced as a result of the

Proposed Project, the presence of construction equipment would negatively affect users of the trail. Through implementation of APM L-9, SCE has committed to avoiding construction activities during holidays and periods of high use for the PCT. However, construction activities along the trail would also create a hazard to recreationists, and a temporary closure of the PCT to prevent injury to recreationists during project construction would result in a potentially significant impact (Class II). In order to allow for continued use of the trail, Mitigation Measure WR-1b (Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users) is recommended. Implementation of this mitigation measure would allow recreationists to use the trail during construction, and would inform visitors of scheduled construction activities. As such, Mitigation Measure WR-1b (Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users) would reduce impacts to PCT users to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1b Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users. No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate with the ~~USDA Forest Service authorized officer of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail~~ USDA Forest Service to establish a temporary detour of the trail to avoid hazardous construction areas. SCE shall prepare a public notice of the temporary trail closure and information on the trail detour consistent with Mitigation Measure L-1a (Prepare Construction Notification Plan). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the ~~authorized officer~~ USDA Forest Service and submit this documentation to the CPUC and the BLM 30 days prior to construction.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class III)

As stated above, the Proposed Project would replace two existing single-circuit transmission lines with one double-circuit transmission line, and project activities would occur within an existing ROW. The proposed double-circuit towers would be greater in height than the single-circuit towers, and as such the Proposed Project would alter the viewshed along the Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment (see Section D.3.7.1, Visual Resources). However, the number of transmission lines that would traverse the PCT would decrease as a result of the project. Overall, there would be no increase in the total amount of industrial development across the PCT as a result of project activities. Consequently, development and operation of the Proposed Project would not significantly change the character of the PCT, and impacts to the recreational value of the PCT would be adverse but less than significant (Class III). No mitigation is required.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class III)

The Devers Substation to East Border of Banning segment would involve the removal of two existing 230 kV single-circuit transmission lines and the construction of a new double-circuit 230 kV transmission line across the PCT. Recreational resources that are located in the vicinity of the ROW would potentially be affected by the siting of a new transmission line, and the construction of proposed transmission towers may result in permanent impacts to the PCT. To prevent a permanent preclusion of use, SCE has committed to implementing APM L-9, which states that new structures would be located parallel to existing structures in order to span and avoid displacement of the PCT. The siting of new towers adjacent to existing towers would avoid the creation of new barriers along the trail. As such, the Proposed Project would create an adverse but less than significant operational impact to users of the PCT, and no mitigation is required (Class III).

D.5.7.2 Banning and Beaumont

As discussed in Section D.5.3.2, Banning and Beaumont, the existing SCE ROW traverses Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club. The Proposed Project would be constructed within this ROW. Additional recreation and WAs are located further from the Banning and Beaumont segment, including the SBNF, Gilman Historic Ranch and Museum, the SCPGA Golf Club, and the Potrero ACEC. None of these recreation areas would be traversed by the Proposed Project, nor would construction activities occur within these areas. As a result, no impacts to the aforementioned recreation areas would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, impacts would occur to Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts to these resources within the Banning and Beaumont segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed across Noble Creek Park for approximately 0.1 miles, and across the Oak Valley Golf Club for approximately two miles. Each of these recreation areas provides a number of facilities for visitors and members, such as sports fields and an RV park at Noble Creek Park, and golf facilities and permanent residences at the Oak Valley Golf Club. See Section D.5.3.2, Banning and Beaumont, for a further description of these recreational facilities.

Project construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the park and golf club. For example, the noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of these recreation areas. Recreationists may be less likely to visit these resources during project construction. In addition, Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club may temporarily close some of their recreational facilities in order to ensure the safety of recreationists during construction activities. This disturbance to recreational activities at the park and golf club would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of the following mitigation measures: Mitigation Measures WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area) and WR-1c (Coordinate with local agencies to identify alternative recreation areas). These mitigation measures would minimize impacts to recreationists at the park and golf club, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

While SCE commits to avoiding high use periods and holidays during construction through implementation of APM L-9, Mitigation Measure WR-1a presents additional detail. Therefore, APM L-9 is superseded by Mitigation Measure WR-1a (below).

Mitigation Measures for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

- WR-1a** **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**
- WR-1c** **Coordinate with local agencies to identify alternative recreation areas.** SCE shall coordinate with the local parks and recreation departments regarding construction activities at the park and recreation facilities listed below, in order to identify alternative recreation sites that may be

used by the public. SCE shall post a public notice at recreation facilities to be closed or limited during construction consistent with Mitigation Measure L-1a (Prepare Construction Notification Plan). SCE shall document its coordination with the parks and recreation departments and shall submit this documentation to the CPUC and the BLM 30 days prior to initiating project construction.

- Noble Creek Park
- Hulda Crooks Park
- Oak Valley Golf Club
- City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class III)

As stated above, the Proposed Project would replace two existing single-circuit transmission lines with one double-circuit transmission line, and project activities would occur within an existing ROW. The proposed double-circuit towers would be greater in height than the single-circuit towers, and as such the Proposed Project would alter the viewshed along the Banning and Beaumont segment (see Section D.3.7.2, Visual Resources). However, the number of transmission lines that would traverse Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club would decrease as a result of the project. Overall, there would be no increase in the total amount of industrial development across the park and golf club as a result of project activities. Consequently, development and operation of the Proposed Project would not significantly change the character of Noble Creek Park or the Oak Valley Golf Club, and impacts to the recreational value of the park and golf club would be adverse but less than significant (Class III). No mitigation is required.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class III)

The Banning and Beaumont segment would involve the removal of two existing 230 kV single-circuit transmission lines and the construction of a new double-circuit 230 kV transmission line across Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club. Recreational resources that are located within the ROW would potentially be affected by the siting of a new transmission line, and the siting of proposed transmission towers may result in permanent impacts to the park and golf club. To prevent a permanent preclusion of use, SCE has committed to implementing APM L-9, which states that new structures would be located parallel to existing structures in order to span and avoid displacement of Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club. The siting of new towers adjacent to existing towers would avoid the creation of new barriers within these recreational facilities. As such, operation of the Proposed Project would result in an adverse but less than significant impact to recreationists at Noble Creek Park and the Oak Valley Golf Club, and no mitigation is required (Class III).

D.5.7.3 Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed approximately 1.3 miles across the Norton Younglove Reserve within the Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon segment. As described in Section D.5.3.3, Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon, the reserve is currently managed by Riverside County and may be expanded to become the San Timoteo State Park.

Project construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the Norton Younglove Reserve. For example, the noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of this recreation area. Recreationists may be less likely to visit this resource during project construction. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to the reserve due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Norton Younglove Reserve would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). Implementation of this mitigation measure would minimize impacts to recreationists at the Norton Younglove Reserve, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class III)

As stated above, the Proposed Project would replace two existing single-circuit transmission lines with one double-circuit transmission line, and project activities would occur within an existing ROW. The proposed double-circuit towers would be greater in height than the single-circuit towers, and as such, the Proposed Project would alter the viewshed along the Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon segment (see Section D.3.7.3, Visual Resources). However, the number of transmission lines that would traverse the Norton Younglove Reserve would decrease as a result of the project. Overall, there would be no increase in the total amount of industrial development across the reserve as a result of project activities. Consequently, development and operation of the Proposed Project would not significantly change the character of the Norton Younglove Reserve, and impacts to the recreational value of the reserve would be adverse but less than significant (Class III). No mitigation is required.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Calimesa and San Timoteo Canyon segment would involve the removal of two existing 230 kV single-circuit transmission lines and the construction of a new double-circuit 230 kV transmission line across the Norton Younglove Reserve. Recreational resources that are located within or adjacent to the ROW would potentially be affected by the siting of a new transmission line, and the construction of proposed transmission towers may create permanent impacts to the reserve. Impacts to existing recreational resources that resulted from locating new towers on these resources would be potentially significant (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Norton Younglove Reserve would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

D.5.7.4 San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed across open space in the Cities of Loma Linda and Colton, and would traverse a number of riding and hiking trails. As many of these trails traverse within or adjacent to the existing ROW, construction activities would conflict with recreational use of the trails. Temporary closure of the trails along the ROW during project construction would be required, which would create a potentially significant impact to trail users (Class II). While construction activities would temporarily preclude access to the riding and hiking trails along the ROW, implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area) would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. This mitigation measure would serve to minimize construction impacts to trail users in the Cities of Loma Linda and Colton, and would ensure that recreationists are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

As stated above, the Proposed Project would remove and replace some existing towers as a component to the reconductored 230 kV transmission lines. All project activities would occur within an existing ROW. The viewshed along the San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation segment would not be altered as a result of the Proposed Project (see Section D.3.7.4, Visual Resources). There would be no increase in the total amount of industrial development across the open space areas in the Cities of Loma Linda and Colton as a result of project activities. Development and operation of the Proposed Project would not change the character of existing trails, nor would these activities impact the recreational value of the City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system. No operational impacts to the character or value of a recreation or WA would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation segment would involve reconductoring of the existing 230 kV transmission lines that traverse the residential and open space areas in the City of Loma Linda and the City of Colton. While some new towers would be constructed along this segment, these towers would replace existing towers and would not create new obstacles within an existing recreational resource. The Proposed Project would not permanently preclude recreational activities in the Cities of Loma Linda or Colton. No operational impacts would occur to riding and hiking trails along the San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation segment.

D.5.7.5 San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation

As discussed in Section D.5.3.5, San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation, the existing SCE ROW traverses the City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system, and is located adjacent to Hulda Crooks Park. An additional recreational resource located further from the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment would include the Santa Ana River Wash ACEC, which would not be traversed by the Proposed Project. Construction activities would not occur within the vicinity of the ACEC. As a result, no impacts to the Santa Ana River Wash ACEC would be expected as a result of construction and operation of the Proposed Project. However, impacts would occur to Hulda Crooks Park and riding and hiking trails along the ROW during reconductoring activities. The following is a discussion of anticipated impacts to these recreation areas within the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Proposed Project would be constructed approximately 0.4 miles across open space and riding and hiking trails in the City of Loma Linda, and approximately 0.1 miles east of Hulda Crooks Park. As described in Section D.5.3.5, San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation, Hulda Crooks Park is utilized by adjacent residents and has a number of recreational facilities that include sports fields and playgrounds.

The City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system traverses within or adjacent to the existing ROW and construction activities would conflict with the use of these trails. Temporary closure of trails along the ROW during project construction would be required. Project construction activities would also create a number of temporary nuisances that would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of Hulda Crooks Parks, such as noise, dust, and construction traffic. Recreationists may be less likely to visit this resource during project construction. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in park visitation due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to Hulda Crooks Park and trails along the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of the following mitigation measures: Mitigation Measures WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area) and WR-1c (Coordinate with local agencies to identify alternative recreation areas). These mitigation measures would serve to minimize construction impacts to trail users and to visitors of Hulda Crooks Park.

Mitigation Measures for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

- WR-1a** **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**
- WR-1c** **Coordinate with local agencies to identify alternative recreation areas.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

As stated above, the Proposed Project would involve reconductoring activities, and no new towers would be constructed in this segment. All project activities would occur within an existing ROW. The viewshed along the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment would not be altered as a result of the Proposed Project (see Section D.3.7.5, Visual Resources). There would be no increase in the total amount of industrial development adjacent to Hulda Crooks Park or across the open space areas in the City of Loma Linda as a result of project activities. Development and operation of the Proposed Project would not change the character of existing trails or parks, nor would these activities impact the recreational value of trails or parks along this segment. No operational impacts would occur to the character or recreational value of Hulda Crooks Park or riding and hiking trails within the City of Loma Linda.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment would involve upgrades to the existing 230 kV transmission line that crosses open space areas in the City of Loma Linda and travels east of Hulda Crooks Park. While existing towers would be reconducted, no new towers would be constructed along this segment. As such, there would be no introduction of new obstacles within an existing recreational resource. The Proposed Project would not permanently preclude recreational activities in the City of Loma Linda. No operational recreation impacts would occur to trails or parks along the San Bernardino Junction to San Bernardino Substation segment.

D.5.8 Alternatives for Devers-Harquahala

D.5.8.1 SCE Harquahala-West Alternative

Environmental Setting

The SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would be located along the northeastern boundary of the Eagletail Mountains WA in Maricopa and La Paz Counties (see Figure Ap.1-1 in Appendix 1 on the enclosed CD). No other recreational facilities have been established along this alternative. A description of the Eagletail Mountains WA is included in Section D.5.2.1, Harquahala to Kofa NWR. The alternative would be constructed within 0.2 miles of the northeastern corner of this WA.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would not be constructed across recreation or WAs. The nearest WA to the alternative would be the Eagletail Mountains WA, located approximately 0.2 miles southwest of the route. Construction activities may require the use of roads that serve as primary access to the WA. No information regarding the number of annual visitors to the Eagletail Mountains WA is readily available. However, visitors would access the WA via I-10 and its frontage roads (i.e., AT&T Frontage Road, Palomas-Harquahala Road). As the alternative would traverse these access roads, any preclusion of visitors to the WA as a result of temporary closure of access roads would create a potentially signifi-

cant recreation impact (Class II). Potential preclusion of the Eagletail Mountains WA would be reduced to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). Implementation of this mitigation measure would minimize impacts to recreationists at the Eagletail Mountains WA, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would be located within a new utility corridor that would traverse agriculture and open space areas. As the alternative would not traverse WAs or recreational facilities, operation of the alternative would not change the character of a recreational resource. While the alternative would be located adjacent to the Eagletail Mountains WA, it would not enter into the WA, and as such, would not diminish the WA's recreational value. Operation of the SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would not impact the recreational value or wilderness character of adjacent recreational resources. No operational impacts to the character or value of a recreation or WA would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation of the alternative would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would not be located across existing recreation or WAs. While the alternative would create a new transmission line corridor, this corridor would be sited along agriculture and open space areas that are not used for recreation. As such, operation of the SCE Harquahala-West Alternative would not preclude recreational activities. No operational impacts would occur to recreation areas along the SCE Harquahala-West Alternative.

D.5.8.2 SCE Palo Verde Alternative

Environmental Setting

The SCE Palo Verde Alternative would be constructed southeast from MP 5 to PVNGS, traveling east of Saddle Mountain. No recreation or WAs would be located within one mile of the alternative. See Section D.5.2.1, Harquahala to Kofa NWR, for a description of this WA. Recreation and WAs in the general area, none within one mile of this alternative, include the following:

- Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area (located 6.7 miles north of the alternative)
- Hummingbird Springs Wilderness Area (located 7.5 miles north of SCE Palo Verde Alternative; accessed from Tonopah Road, Salome Road, or Eagle Eye Road)
- Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area (located 13.5 miles west of SCE Palo Verde Alternative; accessed from East Clanton Well Road or AT&T Frontage Road)
- Signal Mountains Wilderness Area (located 11 miles south of SCE Palo Verde Alternative; accessed from Agua Caliente Road)

- Woolsey Peak Wilderness Area (located 12 miles south of SCE Palo Verde Alternative; accessed from Old Highway 80)
- Buckeye Hills Regional Park (located 11 miles southeast of PVNGS. Accessed from State Route 85)
- Robbins Butte Wildlife Area (located 13 miles southeast of PVNGS. Accessed from State Route 85).

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction of the alternative would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (No Impact)

The SCE Palo Verde Alternative would not be constructed across recreation or WAs. The nearest recreational facility to the alternative would be the Big Horn Mountains WA, located approximately 6.7 miles north. Construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to any recreation or WAs. The construction of the alternative 500 kV transmission line would not temporarily reduce access or visitation to any recreation or WA. As such, no impacts would occur to recreational facilities during construction of the SCE Palo Verde Alternative.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The SCE Palo Verde Alternative would be located within an existing utility corridor and would not traverse recreation or WAs. As the alternative would be constructed adjacent to existing utility uses, it would not change the character of a recreational resource. No recreational resource would be located adjacent to the ROW, and as such, the alternative would not diminish the value of a recreation or WA. No operational impacts to the character or value of a recreation or WA would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The SCE Palo Verde Alternative would not be located across existing recreation or WAs. The alternative would be sited adjacent to existing utility structures (i.e., 500 kV transmission line and towers) parallel to the DPV1 corridor. As such, the alternative 500 kV transmission tower sites are not currently used for recreation, and operation of the alternative would not preclude recreational activities. The SCE Palo Verde Alternative would not impact recreational activities.

D.5.8.3 Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative would be constructed at MP 5, northeast of Saddle Mountain. No recreation or WAs would be located in the vicinity of the alternative (see Figure Ap.1-1 on the enclosed CD). See Section D.5.2.1, Harquahala to Kofa NWR, for a description of this WA. Recreation and WAs in the general area, none within one mile of this alternative, include the following:

- Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area (located 6.7 miles north of the alternative)
- Hummingbird Springs Wilderness Area (located 7.5 miles north of SCE Palo Verde Alternative; accessed from Tonopah Road, Salome Road, or Eagle Eye Road)

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction of the alternative would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (No Impact)

The Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative would not be constructed across recreation or WAs. The nearest recreation or WA would be the Big Horn Mountains WA, located approximately 6.7 miles north of the alternative. Construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to any recreation or WA. The construction of the alternative would not temporarily reduce access or visitation to any recreation or WA. As such, no impacts would occur to recreational facilities during construction of the Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (No Impact)

The alternative switchyard would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line and would not be sited within a recreation or WA. As the Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative would be constructed along an existing utility corridor outside of a recreation or WA, the alternative would not change the character of a recreational resource, nor would it impact the value or character of any recreation or WA. No operational impacts to the character or value of a recreation or WA would occur.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative would not be located across existing recreation or WAs. The alternative switchyard would be constructed in an open space area that is not currently used for recreation. Additionally, operation of the alternative switchyard would not preclude recreational activities. No impacts to recreational activities would occur during operation of the Harquahala Junction Switchyard Alternative.

D.5.8.4 Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative would extend across the following Proposed Project segments: Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area and Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation. As with the Proposed Project, recreation and WAs that would be traversed by the alternative include the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC for approximately 1.3 miles, the Alligator Rock ACEC for 3.5 miles, and the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC for two miles. See Section D.5.2.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, and Section D.5.2.7, Cactus City Rest Area to Devers Substation, for a description of these recreation areas. The alternative would also travel within one mile of the Mule Mountains ACEC, the Chuckwalla Mountains WA, the Orocopia Mountains WA, and the Mecca Hills WA to the south, Joshua Tree National Park to the north, and Indio Hills Palms State Park to the northeast. Additional recreation and WAs that are located further from the alternative include the Little Chuckwalla Mountains WA to the south, and the Palen/McCoy WA, Palen Dry Lake ACEC, Desert Lily Preserve ACEC, and the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC to the north.

Four components of the alternative would differ from the Proposed Project. The following is a list of these components and a description of their location relative to recreation or WAs (see Figure Ap.1-11 on the enclosed CD):

- **Keim Substation/Switching Station.** The Keim Substation/Switching Station would be located across from the Blythe Energy Project power plant. The nearest recreation area to the alternative substation would be the Mule Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern, located approximately seven miles southwest of the substation site.
- **Midpoint Substation/Switching Station.** The Midpoint Substation/Switching Station would be located adjacent to the existing DPV1 utility corridor. The nearest recreation area to the alternative substation would be the Mule Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern, located approximately 2.5 miles south of the substation site.
- **Substation West of Dillon Road.** The new substation near the City of Indio would be located adjacent to the existing DPV1 utility corridor. The nearest recreation area to the alternative substation would be Joshua Tree National Park, located approximately five miles northeast of the substation site.
- **Transmission Line from Keim to Midpoint Substations/Switching Stations.** The alternative transmission line would be located within an existing right-of-way traveling southwest from Keim Substation for approximately 1.8 miles, at which point it would be constructed within a new right-of-way traveling west towards the DPV1 right-of-way for approximately seven miles. The nearest recreation area would be the Mule Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern, located approximately two miles southwest of the transmission line.

Table D.5-4 lists recreation facilities and WAs that are located in the vicinity of the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative, including their distance and relative location to the alternative.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

500 kV Transmission Line Component. The Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative would be constructed approximately 1.3 miles within an existing ROW across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, and approximately 3.5 miles within a new ROW across the Alligator Rock ACEC. As with the Proposed Project, the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative would also be constructed less than one mile southwest of the Indio Hills Palms State Park, and approximately two miles across the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC.

Construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the aforementioned recreational resources. The noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of these recreation areas. Recreationists may be less likely to visit these resources during construction of the alternative. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. For example, construction activities may require the use of the roads that serve as primary access to the Indio Hills Palms State Park. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to the ACECs, State Park, and preserve due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, Alligator Rock ACEC, Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC, and Indio Hills Palms State Park would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). This mitigation measure would serve to minimize construction impacts to recreationists at the ACECs, State park, and preserve.

Table D.5-4. Recreational Resources along Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative

Recreation and Wilderness Areas	Jurisdiction	Land Use Type	Distance from Project
Within 1 Mile of DSWTP Alternative			
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Traversed by Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative for 1.3 miles. Accessed from Chuckwalla Valley Rd.
Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Adjacent to and south of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Corn Springs Rd.
Alligator Rock ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Traversed by Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative for 3.5 miles.
Joshua Tree National Park	National Park Service	Open Space and Recreation	Located less than 0.5 miles north of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Cottonwood Springs Rd.
Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 0.5 miles south of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Box Canyon Rd.
Indio Hills Palms State Park	CA Department of Parks and Recreation	North–Open Space and Recreation South–Open Space and Recreation, Residential	Less than one mile northeast of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Madison St. and Washington St.
Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC	USFWS, BLM, CA Department of Fish and Game, Center for Natural Lands Management	North–Open Space and Recreation South–Open Space and Recreation	Traversed by Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative for two miles. Accessed from Washington St. or Ramon Rd.
Greater than 1 Mile Away			
Corn Springs ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 3.7 miles south of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Corn Springs Rd.
Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 3.7 miles south of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Chuckwalla Valley Rd and 4WD roads.
Palen/McCoy Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 3.4 miles north of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Highway 177 and 4WD roads.
Palen Dry Lake ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located two miles north of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Highway 177 and 4WD roads.
Mecca Hills Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 1.6 miles south of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Box Canyon Rd.
Mule Mountains ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 2.5 miles south of Midpoint Substation/Switching Station. Accessed from Wiley's Well Rd.
Desert Lily Preserve ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 5.3 miles north of Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative. Accessed from Highway 177.
Big Morongo Canyon ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located four miles north of Devers Substation. Accessed from Highway 62.

Substation Station/Switching Station Component. Neither the Keim and Midpoint Substations/Switching Stations nor the substation west of Dillon Road would be constructed across recreation or WAs. The nearest recreation or WA to the Keim and Midpoint Substations/Switching Stations would be the Mule Mountains ACEC, located approximately seven miles southwest and 2.5 miles south, respectively. The nearest recreation area to the substation west of Dillon Road would be Joshua Tree National Park, located approximately five miles northeast of the alternative substation site. Substation construction activities would not require the use of roads that serve as the primary access to these recreational areas. The construction of the proposed substations would not temporarily reduce access or visitation to a recreation facility. No other recreation or WA would be located adjacent to the alternative substations, and as such, no impacts would occur to recreational facilities during construction of the substation/switching stations.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

500 kV Transmission Line Component. As with the Proposed Project, the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative would create a new 500 kV transmission line across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, the Alligator Rock ACEC, and the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. This alternative would be located adjacent to an existing utility line, with the exception of the Alligator Rock ACEC in which a new transmission line ROW would be created. The amount of industrial development that traverses the ACECs and the preserve would be intensified as a result of the alternative. Visitors to the ACECs and preserve are attracted to the wildlife habitat, available recreational facilities, cultural resources, as well as the natural landscape. Overall, the alternative would intensify the industrial nature of the ROW through the construction and operation of new towers and spur roads across the ACECs and preserve. As discussed in Section D.5.6.7, operation of the Proposed Project would not significantly impact the recreational value or character of the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC (Class III). However, the proposed 500 kV transmission towers that would be constructed across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and the Alligator Rock ACECs would significantly increase the total amount of industrial development within these ACECs, further degrading their landscape and character. Section D.3.6.2, Visual Resources, describes the long-term, operational visual impacts that would be experienced by recreationists and travelers to the Alligator Rock ACEC. Overall, development and operation of the alternative would change the character of the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket and the Alligator Rock ACEC, significantly diminishing their recreational value. Impacts to the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC and the Alligator Rock ACEC would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative across the Alligator Rock and Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACECs.

Substation Station/Switching Station Component. The Keim and Midpoint Substations/Switching Stations and the substation west of Dillon Road would be located adjacent to existing utilities (i.e., BEP power plant, DPV1 ROW) and would not be sited within a recreation or WA. As such, operation of the substations would not impact the character or value of a recreational resource.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

500 kV Transmission Line Component. The Desert Southwest Transmission Project Alternative would create a new ROW inside the northeastern and northwestern boundaries of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The alternative would be located adjacent to an existing 500 kV transmission line across the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, and the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC. Recreational resources that are located in the vicinity of the existing utility ROW would be affected by the collocation of a second 500 kV transmission line. The location of new transmission towers or access and spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the ACECs and preserve. As such, the siting of new towers or roads within these resources would create potentially significant impacts (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, Alligator Rock ACEC, or the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area), which would serve to minimize permanent preclusion of recreational resources.

Substation Station/Switching Station Component. Neither the Keim and Midpoint Substations/Switching Stations nor the substation west of Dillon Road would be located across existing recreation or WAs. The location of the alternative substations would be adjacent to existing utilities (e.g., BEP power plant, DPV1 ROW). None of the alternative substation sites are currently used for recreation, and operation of the substations would not preclude recreational activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a **Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

D.5.8.5 Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would diverge from the Proposed Project in order to avoid traversing the Alligator Rock ACEC. The alternative would travel north of and adjacent to the ACEC within a new ROW, but would not cross into the ACEC (see Figure Ap.1-5 on the enclosed CD). Additional recreation and WAs located in the vicinity of the Alligator Rock ACEC include Desert Lily Preserve ACEC and Joshua Tree National Park to the north, Chuckwalla Mountains WA and Corn Springs ACEC to the south, Palen Dry Lake ACEC to the east, and Orocopia Mountains WA to the southwest. See Section D.5.2.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, for a description of the Alligator Rock ACEC.

Table D.5-5 lists recreational facilities and WAs that are located in the vicinity of the Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative, including their distance and relative location to the alternative.

Table D.5-5. Recreational Resources along Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative

Recreation and Wilderness Areas	Jurisdiction	Land Use Type	Distance from Project
Within 1 Mile of Alternative			
Joshua Tree National Park	National Park Service	Open Space and Recreation	Located less than 0.5 miles north of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Cottonwood Springs Road.
Alligator Rock ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located less than 0.1 miles south of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative.
Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Adjacent to and south of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Corn Springs Road.
Orocopia Mountains Wilderness Area	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 0.5 miles south of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Box Canyon Road.
Greater than 1 Mile from Alternative			
Palen Dry Lake ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 2 miles north of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Highway 177 and 4WD roads.
Corn Springs ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 3.7 miles south of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Corn Springs Road..
Desert Lily Preserve ACEC	BLM	Open Space and Recreation	Located 5.3 miles north of Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative. Accessed from Highway 177.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class III)

The Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would be constructed within 0.1 miles of the northern border of the Alligator Rock ACEC. As described in Section D.5.2.6, Midpoint Substation to Cactus City Rest Area, the Alligator Rock ACEC is a recreational resource that is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#), and is designated for its archaeological values.

Although the Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would be constructed within a new utility corridor adjacent to the ACEC, the alternative would be located outside of the ACEC boundary and north of I-10. Given that construction activities associated with this alternative would be separated from the ACEC by I-10, it is unlikely that these activities would contribute to a temporary reduction in access or visitation to the ACEC. As I-10 would serve as a buffer to these construction activities, the alternative would have a less than significant construction-related impact on the Alligator Rock ACEC (Class III). No mitigation is required.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class III)

As stated above, the Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would create a new utility ROW adjacent to the Alligator Rock ACEC. While the alternative 500 kV transmission line would be located outside of the ACEC boundary, the amount of industrial development that is within the vicinity of the

ACEC would be intensified as a result of the alternative. However, this alternative would be separated from the ACEC by I-10. Impacts to the character of the ACEC would be buffered by its location on the north side of I-10. The Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would have a less than significant impact on the character and recreational value of the Alligator Rock ACEC, and no mitigation is required (Class III).

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (No Impact)

The Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would be sited within a new corridor outside of the northern boundary of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The alternative would not be located across an existing recreational facility, and none of the alternative tower locations would be sited on a recreational resource. The Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative would not permanently preclude recreational activities at the Alligator Rock ACEC. No operational impacts to recreational activities would occur.

D.5.8.6 Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative would diverge from the Proposed Project in order to minimize its travel across the Alligator Rock ACEC. The alternative would be constructed inside the northeastern boundary of the ACEC within a new ROW for approximately two miles. As it approaches Desert Center, the alternative would exit the ACEC, would turn southwest, and would re-enter the ACEC for approximately 0.4 miles within a new ROW before it re-joins the Proposed Project (see Figure Ap.1-5 on the enclosed CD).

See Section D.5.8.5, Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative, for a description of the Alligator Rock ACEC and the other recreation and WAs located in the vicinity of the ACEC.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative would be constructed approximately 2.4 miles across the Alligator Rock ACEC within a new utility corridor. The alternative would also be constructed an additional two miles across the ACEC within an existing ROW. Construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of this recreation area. Recreationists may be less likely to visit this resource during construction of the alternative. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to the ACEC due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Alligator Rock ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area). This mitigation measure would minimize impacts to recreationists at the ACEC, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

As stated above, the Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative would create a new utility ROW inside portions of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The creation of this new 500 kV transmission line corridor would intensify the amount of industrial development that traverses the ACEC. Additionally the alternative would not be collocated with existing utilities, thereby altering the natural landscape of an undeveloped portion of the ACEC to an industrial use. Development and operation of the Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative would change the character of the Alligator Rock ACEC and would significantly diminish its recreational value. Impacts to the Alligator Rock ACEC would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative across the Alligator Rock ACEC.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Alligator Rock–Blythe Energy Transmission Alternative would create a new ROW inside the northeastern boundary of the Alligator Rock ACEC, and along a 0.4-mile portion that extends south from the northern boundary of the ACEC. The location of new transmission towers or access and spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the Alligator Rock ACEC. Impacts to existing recreational resources that resulted from siting new towers or roads on or near these resources would be potentially significant (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Alligator Rock ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

D.5.8.7 Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative would diverge from the Proposed Project in order to minimize its travel across the Alligator Rock ACEC. The alternative would be constructed inside the northeastern boundary of the ACEC within a new ROW for approximately two miles. As it approaches Desert Center, the alternative would exit the ACEC and would continue south of and adjacent to the I-10. This alternative would re-enter and traverse the northwestern portion of the ACEC for approximately 1.5 miles, would exit the ACEC's western boundary, and would re-join the Proposed Project at MP 160 (see Figure Ap.1-5 on the enclosed CD).

See Section D.5.8.5, Alligator Rock–North of Desert Center Alternative, for a description of the Alligator Rock ACEC and the other recreation and WAs located in the vicinity of the ACEC.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative would be constructed approximately 3.5 miles through the Alligator Rock ACEC within a new utility corridor. Construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of this recreation area. Recreationists may be less likely to visit this resource during construction of the alternative. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to the ACEC due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the Alligator Rock ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area), which would minimize impacts to recreationists at the ACEC, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

As stated above, the Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative would create a new utility ROW inside portions of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The creation of this new 500 kV transmission line corridor would intensify the industrial nature of the ACEC through the construction and operation of new towers and access or spur roads. Additionally the alternative would not be collocated with existing utilities, thereby altering the natural landscape of an undeveloped portion of the ACEC to an industrial use. Development and operation of the Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative would change the character of the Alligator Rock ACEC and would significantly diminish its recreational value. Impacts to the Alligator Rock ACEC would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative across the ACEC.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Alligator Rock–South of I-10 Frontage Alternative would create a new ROW inside the northeastern and northwestern boundaries of the Alligator Rock ACEC. The location of new transmission towers or access and spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the Alligator Rock ACEC. Impacts to existing recreational resources that resulted from siting new towers or roads on or near these resources would be potentially significant (Class II). Potential preclusion of recreational resources at the Alligator Rock ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area).

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

D.5.9 Alternatives for West of Devers

D.5.9.1 Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative

Environmental Setting

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would be constructed within an existing 500 kV transmission line corridor that travels within the boundaries of several recreation and WAs (see Figure D.5-4 on the enclosed CD). This alternative would travel within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument for approximately 4.7 miles, in which it would cross the PCT. The alternative would also cross the boundaries of the SBNF and the San Jacinto WA for approximately 1.9 miles, and the Potrero ACEC for approximately 1.1 miles. Additional recreation and WAs are located further south of the alternative within the SBNF, and include the Mount San Jacinto State Park. Although the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would travel across the Lakeview Mountains, no existing recreation areas or facilities that would be adjacent to the alternative were identified within these mountains.

The following is a description of the recreation and WAs that would be traversed by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative:

- **Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.** The 271,400-acre Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument was established by Congress in 2000 and is managed by the BLM, [California Desert District](#) (BLM and USDA Forest Service, 2004). [Additionally the Monument is managed under a Cooperative Agreement between the BLM and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians \(October 13, 1999\) “...to coordinate and cooperate in management of Federal Lands within and outside the external boundaries of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation within the...monument designation.”](#) The purpose of the national monument is “to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values, found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, landforms, and natural and cultural resources of these mountains and to recreate therein,” (BLM and USDA Forest Service, 2004). Other designated recreation and wilderness areas are located within the national monument, and include the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, the PCT, and the Mount San Jacinto State Park. The national monument would be traversed by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative.
- **Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.** The 2,650-mile PCT was designated by Congress in 1968 as one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System. Extending from Mexico to Canada, the PCT traverses the states of California, Oregon, and Washington and is limited to non-mechanized means of travel (PCT, 2005). The portion of the trail that would be crossed by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative is managed through an existing Memorandum of Understanding that includes the BLM, USDA Forest Service, and the Pacific Crest Trail Association.
- **San Bernardino National Forest.** The SBNF was established in September 1925 by President Calvin Coolidge and is managed by the USDA Forest Service (USDA Forest Service, 2005a). The SBNF is located both north and south of I-10; [the alternative would parallel the existing Devers-Valley No. 1 500 kV transmission line across 1.8 miles of the southern portion of the SBNF](#)~~the~~

~~southern portion of the SBNF (south of I-10) would be traversed by the alternative.~~ Recreational activities at the SBNF include hiking, camping, off-highway vehicle use, skiing, fishing, and horseback riding (USDA Forest Service, 2006a).

~~In 1984, the preferred route for the proposed Devers-Valley No. 1 route was across tribal lands owned by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, for which permission to cross was not granted. As such, an alternate easement for the Devers-Valley No. 1 route was issued on May 30, 1985 by the USDA Forest Service under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (USDA Forest Service, 2006b). The authorization for the 330-foot wide easement across the SBNF is set to expire on December 31, 2015, but is renewable provided that SCE will comply with then-existing rules and regulations and is compatible with then-existing land use plans governing the occupancy and use of National Forest System lands (USDA Forest Service, 2006b).~~

- **San Jacinto Wilderness Area.** The 32,248-acre San Jacinto Wilderness Area was designated by Congress in 1964 and is managed by the USDA Forest Service. Approximately 23 miles of the PCT are located within the wilderness area. Additional recreational opportunities include 16 hiking trails and rock climbing routes at Tahquitz Rock and Suicide Rock (Wilderness, 2006j). Although the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would travel across the boundaries of the San Jacinto Wilderness Area, it would be located within the existing SCE ROW. Pursuant to Public Law 98-425, this ROW is no longer designated as wilderness. See Section 4.3.1 of Appendix 1 (Alternatives Screening Report) for further discussion of Public Law 98-425.
- **Potrero Area of Critical Environmental Concern.** The Potrero ACEC would be traversed by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative along the northern boundary of the ACEC. The ACEC is managed by the BLM, California Desert District, and is designated for its wildlife habitat. At least five species of wildlife that are listed as threatened or endangered may occur within the Potrero ACEC.
- **Lakeview Mountains.** Traversed by the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative from MP 32.5 to MP 38.7, and accessed from Juniper Flats Rd.

Consistency with Plans and Policies. As described above, the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would traverse National Forest System lands, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument, and the San Jacinto WA. These recreational and wilderness resources are under the jurisdiction of two acts and two plans that were not identified in Section D.5.4, Applicable Regulations, Plans, and Standards. Summaries of these plans are provided below and are discussed further in the impact evaluation.

- **California Wilderness Act of 1984.** Subsequent to the Wilderness Act of 1964, the State of California passed the California Wilderness Act of 1984 that served to expand the existing San Geronio and San Jacinto Wilderness Areas, and created the Santa Rosa Wilderness Area (Public Law 98 425, Section 101[a][23][24][28]). The Act also included text permitting the designation of transmission line corridors by the Secretary of Agriculture. The following text is included as a provision to the expansion of the San Jacinto Wilderness Area:

The Secretary of Agriculture may pursuant to an application filed within 10 years of the date of enactment of this title, grant a right-of-way for, and authorize construction of, a transmission line or lines within the area depicted as “potential powerline corridor” on the map entitled “San Jacinto Wilderness Additions–Proposed”: Provided further, that if a power transmission line is constructed within such corridor, the corridor shall cease to be a part of the San Jacinto Wilderness and the Secretary of Agriculture shall publish notice thereof in the Federal Register. (Public Law 98 425, Section 101[a][24])

- **Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000.** This act was approved on October 24, 2000, and created the first national monument to be designated by law versus Presidential Proclamation. The act establishes the goals for preservation and management of the monument and establishes the framework for preparation of a monument management plan. The act addresses utility corridors in its discussion of Existing and Historical Uses of Federal Lands (BLM, 2006; BLM, 2000b).
- **Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, Proposed Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report.** This Management Plan was developed by the BLM and the USDA Forest Service in response to the National Monument Act of 2000, and addresses management and preservation of the national monument. The Plan provides the purpose and need for the national monument and addresses utility corridors within the monument (BLM and USDA Forest Service, 2004).
- **2005 Land Management Plan: Angeles National Forest, Cleveland National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, San Bernardino National Forest.** At the time of this analysis, the USDA Forest Service completed its update of the 1989 Land and Resources Management Plan. The 2005 Land Management Plan: Angeles National Forest, Cleveland National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, San Bernardino National Forest was approved on September 20, 2005, and became effective on October 31, 2005. However, the Record of Decision has been withdrawn by the USDA Forest Service. To ensure that all applicable SBNF plans are reviewed, both the 1989 and 2005 management plans are discussed below.
 - **1989 Land Management Plan.** This 1989 Land Management Plan was developed to provide a management program that reflects a mix of activities, while allowing for the use and protection of National Forest System resources. In order to plan and manage recreational resources within National Forest System lands, the USDA Forest Service uses a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). The ROS characterizes recreational opportunities into six categories: Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roded-Natural, Rural, and Urban.
 - **2005 Land Management Plan.** The 2005 Land Management Plan consists of three parts that examine vision, strategy, and design criteria for the Pacific Southwest Region. Part 1 of the Plan includes goals that apply to this project. The National Strategic Plan Goal 4 states: “The Nation’s Forest and grassland play a significant role in meeting America’s need for producing and transmitting energy. Unless otherwise restricted, National Forest System Lands are available for energy exploration, development and infrastructure (e.g., well sites, pipelines, and transmission lines).” Part 2 of the Plan includes the SBNF Strategy, which defines and describes each of the land use zones within the SBNF, and the suitable uses permitted in each zone. Major utility corridors are permitted in designated areas within the following zones: developed areas interface, back country, and back country motorized use restricted. According to the SBNF Strategy, the Proposed Project would be located within a wilderness zone, which is not suitable for utility corridors (USDA Forest Service, 2005b).

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As described in the Environmental Setting above, the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would travel through the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC, and across the PCT. Additional recreation and WAs are located south of the alternative within the SBNF, but would not be traversed by the alternative. No recreation impacts would be expected to occur to recreation and WAs south of the alternative within the SBNF. While the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would also traverse the Lakeview Mountains, no recreation or WAs were identified within or adjacent to the alternative. As such, no recreation impacts would be anticipated within the Lake-

view Mountains. However, impacts would occur to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, the PCT, the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC. The following is a discussion of anticipated recreation impacts along the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative.

Construction Impacts

Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas (Class II)

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would be constructed approximately 4.7 miles across the boundaries of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, approximately 1.9 miles across the SBNF and the San Jacinto WA, and approximately 1.1 miles across the Potrero ACEC. These recreation areas were designated to protect biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational or scientific values, and are used for a number of recreational activities. The alternative would also cross the PCT within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument at MP 7.6. As described in the Environmental Setting above, the PCT was designated as one of the first scenic trails in the National Trails System, and is limited to non-mechanized means of travel.

Although the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would be located within an existing utility corridor, construction activities create a number of temporary nuisances that would diminish the value of the aforementioned recreation areas. The noise, dust, and construction traffic generated during construction activities would negatively affect a visitor's enjoyment of these resources. Recreationists may be less likely to visit the monument, SBNF, WA, or ACEC during project construction. The location of construction equipment may also temporarily preclude access to some recreation areas. Trails such as the PCT that are traversed by the ROW would be temporarily closed or rerouted during construction. Such a disturbance to recreational activities or a reduction in the visitation to these resources due to construction activities would result in potentially significant impacts (Class II). Construction-related impacts to the national monument, PCT, SBNF, San Jacinto WA, or Potrero ACEC would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of the following mitigation measures: Mitigation Measures WR-1a (Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area) and WR-1b (Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users). These mitigation measures would serve to minimize construction impacts at these recreation areas, and would ensure that recreational users are informed of scheduled construction activities.

Mitigation Measures for Impact WR-1: Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas

WR-1a **Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area.**

WR-1b **Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users.**

Operational Impacts

Impact WR-2: Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would create a new 500 kV transmission line across the boundaries of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, the PCT, the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC. This alternative would be located adjacent to an existing utility line, and would not likely require an expansion of the current easement. However, the alternative would intensify the industrial nature of the ROW through the construction and operation of new towers and spur roads across these recreational resources.

The new 500 kV transmission towers would be approximately 150 feet in height. Given the substantial size of these structures and their industrial appearance, the new transmission towers would contrast with the natural landscape of the national monument, PCT, SBNF, WA, and the ACEC. New towers would be constructed across or adjacent to these resources, and as such, the alternative would significantly increase the total amount of industrial development within or adjacent to recreational areas, further degrading their landscape and character (see Section D.3.9.1, Visual Resources).

In addition, existing resource management plans include goals and policies that address the need to preserve and protect the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Section 5(e) of the National Monument Act states, “Nothing in this act shall have the effect of terminating any valid existing right of way within the Monument. The management plan prepared for the National Monument shall address the need for and, as necessary, establish plans for the installation, construction, and maintenance of public utility rights-of-way within the National Monument outside of designated wilderness areas,” (BLM, 2000b). As stated, the act permits the continued use of existing ROWs within the monument. ~~While~~However, the act does not discuss the future development of existing utility corridors, ~~but it~~ defers to the management plan for utility issues. In a reference to the future use of existing utilities within the Monument, the management plan states, “Existing special uses are expected to continue (Non-Recreation Special-Uses).” However, ~~A~~according to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Final Management Plan, the purpose and need of the national monument is to preserve the monument’s national significant resources (biological, cultural, recreational, and others) and to secure the monument for future generations to have the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas and wildlife (BLM and USDA Forest Service, 2004). As such, the purpose and need set forth in the management plan for the national monument supports the preservation of WAs and the protection of natural resources, including recreation.

The 2005 Land Management Plan: Part 2 San Bernardino National Forest Strategy also restricts utility development in WAs. However, the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would traverse the San Jacinto WA in an existing utility corridor that ceased to be designated as wilderness. As such, there would be no conflicts with the wilderness or recreational policies of the USDA Forest Service Land Management Plan that would require a plan amendment. For further discussion of plan amendments that may be required from impacts to other issue areas, see Section C.4.3, Alternatives, and D.3.9, Visual Resources.

Overall, development and operation of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would change the character of recreational resources at the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument, the PCT, the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC. ~~The siting and operation of a new 500-kV transmission line would be inconsistent with the purpose and need of the national monument.~~ The intensification of the existing ROW as a result of the alternative would also significantly diminish the character and recreational value of traversed and adjacent recreational resources. Impacts to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument, the PCT, the SBNF, the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC would be significant and unmitigable (Class I). No mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce the industrial development of the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative across these recreational resources.

Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities (Class II)

The Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative would involve the construction of a new 500 kV transmission line adjacent to an existing 500 kV line across the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, the PCT, the SBNF and the San Jacinto WA, and the Potrero ACEC. Recreational resources that are located in the vicinity of the existing utility ROW would be affected by the collocation of a second 500 kV transmission line. For example, hiking trails such as the PCT that travel under or along the ROW would be impacted if a new transmission tower was erected on the trail. The introduction of new

structures along these trails may create an obstacle to recreational users of the trails. The construction of new spur roads would also affect recreational resources (e.g., trails, campgrounds) if they are created across or adjacent to these resources. Overall, the location of new transmission towers or spur roads would permanently impact existing recreational resources within the national monument, PCT, SBNF, WA or the ACEC. As such, the siting of new towers or spur roads within these resources would create potentially significant impacts (Class II). Potential preclusion of the aforementioned recreational resources would be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measure WR-3a (Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area). Implementation of this mitigation measure would serve to minimize preclusion of recreation areas.

Mitigation Measure for Impact WR-3: Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities

WR-3a Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area.

D.5.10 Environmental Impacts of the No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative is defined in Section C.6. The No Project Alternative includes the assumption that existing transmission lines and power plants would continue to operate. The effects that these facilities cause on the existing environment would not change, so no new impacts would occur from continuing operation of the existing transmission lines and power plants. Also, under the No Project Alternative, the proposed DPV2 project would not be constructed, so the impacts associated with construction and operation of the project would not occur. Avoided impacts would include the temporary preclusion of the recreation areas along the Proposed Project route, such as WAs, ACECs, a wildlife refuge, preserve, national forest, community parks, and private recreation facilities. Specific operational impacts to recreational resources would also be avoided under the No Project Alternative. For example, the proposed transmission towers would not be constructed, and consequently, would not introduce barriers or permanent impacts to existing recreation areas. Without implementation of the Proposed Project, there would be no introduction of a new industrial use across recreational resources, and as such, the character and recreational value of these resources would not be affected. In particular, no impacts would occur to the Kofa NWR, the Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, the Alligator Rock ACEC, and the Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC under the No Project Alternative.

The first component of the No Project Alternative is the continuation of ongoing demand-side actions, including energy conservation and distributed generation. These actions would result in a shift in energy use to off-peak periods and the development of new distributed generation for small businesses and retail customers. Impacts may occur to wilderness or recreational resources if distributed generation facilities are constructed within or adjacent to these resources. However, it is unlikely that the development of new distributed generation would be located on existing recreational uses.

The second component of the No Project Alternative is the continuation of supply-side actions, resulting in potentially increased generation within California or increased transmission into California to serve anticipated growth in electricity consumption. Depending on the location of new generation and transmission infrastructure, the impacts of new power plants and new transmission lines to wilderness and recreation areas would be similar to the Proposed Project. If new facilities are sited within recreational areas, wilderness and recreational resources would be temporarily impacted during construction. In addition, the facilities would permanently preclude recreation activities and may significantly change the character or value of these recreational resources. At this time, there is no specific proposal or assumption regarding the amount of generation or the location of the generation under the No Project Alternative.

D.5.11 Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Table

Table D.5-6 presents the mitigation monitoring table for Wilderness and Recreation.

Table D.5-6. Mitigation Monitoring Program – Wilderness and Recreation

IMPACT WR-1	Construction activities would temporarily reduce access and visitation to recreation or wilderness areas. (Class II)
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>WR-1a: Coordinate construction schedule and activities with the authorized officer for the recreation area. No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate construction activities and the project construction schedule with the authorized officer of the recreation areas listed below. SCE shall schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods, including major holidays, in coordination with, and at the discretion of the authorized officer. SCE shall located construction equipment to avoid temporary preclusion of recreation areas per the recommendations of the authorized officer. SCE shall also prepare a public notice of construction activities consistent with Mitigation Measure L-1a (Prepare Construction Notification Plan). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer, and provide this documentation to the California Public Utilities Commission and the Bureau of Land Management 30 days prior to construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area • Harquahala Mountains Wilderness Area • Harquahala Peak • Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area • San Jacinto Wilderness Area • Kofa National Wildlife Refuge • Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument • San Bernardino National Forest • Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail • Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket Area of Critical Environmental Concern • Alligator Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern • Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Area of Critical Environmental Concern • Potrero Area of Critical Environmental Concern • BLM off-highway vehicle trails in Shavers Valley • Indio Hills Palms State Park • Norton Younglove Reserve • Noble Creek Park • Hulda Crooks Park • Oak Valley Golf Club • City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system
Location	At construction sites that occur within, and along primary access roads that serve, the following recreation areas: Big Horn Mountains Wilderness Area, Harquahala Mountains Wilderness Area, Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area, San Jacinto Wilderness Area, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, San Bernardino National Forest, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC, Alligator Rock ACEC, Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC, Potrero ACEC, Indio Hills Palms State Park, Norton Younglove Reserve, Noble Creek Park, Hulda Crooks Park, Oak Valley Golf Club, City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE postpones construction activities per the discretion of the authorized officer for the recreation area. Monitor also ensures that SCE posts notices of construction activities and applicable detour routes along primary recreation access points.
Effectiveness Criteria	Visitors are informed of construction activities and alternative access routes, if applicable. Recreational activities are not precluded during holidays and other peak periods.
Responsible Agency	CPUC; BLM Phoenix, Yuma, and Palm Springs Field Offices.
Timing	Minimum 40 days prior to construction.
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>WR-1b: Provide a temporary detour for Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail users. No less than 40 days prior to construction, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail to establish a temporary detour of the trail to avoid hazardous construction areas. SCE shall prepare a public notice of the temporary trail closure and information on the trail detour consistent with Mitigation Measure L-1a (Prepare Construction Notification). SCE shall document its coordination efforts with the authorized officer and submit this documentation to the CPUC/BLM 30 days prior to construction.</p>

Table D.5-6. Mitigation Monitoring Program – Wilderness and Recreation

Location	Along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail for two miles north and south of proposed Towers 227 to 229 for the Proposed Project, and two miles north and south of MP 7.6 for the Devers-Valley No. 2 Alternative route. Notices shall also be posted in San Bernardino National Forest ranger stations and the Bureau of Land Management Palm Springs Field Office.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE establishes detour route for users of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Monitor also ensures that SCE posts notices identifying detour route and its location at San Bernardino National Forest ranger stations, and north and south of the construction site along the trail.
Effectiveness Criteria	Users of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail are informed of detour route at San Bernardino National Forest ranger stations or by signs posted along trail.
Responsible Agency	California Public Utilities Commission; Bureau of Land Management Palm Springs Field Office; USDA Forest Service.
Timing	Minimum 40 days prior to construction.
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>WR-1c: Coordinate with local agencies to identify alternative recreation areas. SCE shall coordinate with the local parks and recreation departments regarding construction activities at the park and recreation facilities listed below, in order to identify alternative recreation sites that may be used by the public. SCE shall post a public notice at recreation facilities to be closed or limited during construction consistent with Mitigation Measure L 1a (Prepare Construction Notification Plan to ensure effective notification and minimize construction disturbance). SCE shall document its coordination with the parks and recreation departments and shall submit this documentation to the CPUC/BLM 30 days prior to initiating project construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noble Creek Park • Hulda Crooks Park • Oak Valley Golf Club • City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system
Location	At construction sites that occur within the following recreation areas: Noble Creek Park, Hulda Crooks Park, Oak Valley Golf Club, City of Loma Linda riding and hiking trail system.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE communicates with city officials to identify alternative recreation areas for city residents during project construction. Monitor also ensures that SCE provides notice at affected recreation areas, which inform the public of upcoming closure periods and alternate recreation areas.
Effectiveness Criteria	Cities of Beaumont and Loma Linda identify alternate recreation areas. Public is aware of closure periods and alternate recreation sites.
Responsible Agency	CPUC; BLM, Palm Springs Office; City of Beaumont; City of Loma Linda.
Timing	Minimum 30 days prior to construction.
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>C-1g: Minimize impacts at Harquahala Peak. SCE shall consult with BLM's Phoenix Area Office to define and implement the most effective actions to reduce impacts of the proposed telecommunications tower at Harquahala Peak. Options for consideration shall include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCE shall design and finish the tower for the proposed new facility to emulate the existing facilities. In addition, the location of the proposed new tower shall be relocated to the place determined by BLM to minimize effects on the interpretive site. • SCE shall enhance or improve visitor facilities that provide historic interpretive information in order to better convey to the public the scientific contributions that the Observatory has made to history, and which make it worthy of NRHP listing Under Criterion • SCE shall consult with CAP and BLM to develop a co-located communications facility requiring only one tower to serve both parties. • Based on consultation with BLM, SCE shall relocate the laydown area to a site that minimizes effects on visitors to Harquahala Peak. <p>After consultation with BLM on the options defined above, SCE shall submit a revised description of the Harquahala Peak facilities and laydown area along with detailed construction plans for review and approval by BLM's Phoenix Area Office at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.</p>

Table D.5-6. Mitigation Monitoring Program – Wilderness and Recreation

Location	At construction sites that occur within the following recreation areas: Harquahala Peak (and all associated recreational amenities), Eagle Eye Staging Area and Camp, and Harquahala Peak Pack Trail, and Harquahala Peak Road.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE communicates and coordinates fully with the BLM Phoenix Area Office to identify alternative recreation areas for visitors during project construction and ensure the most effective actions to reduce impacts of the proposed telecommunications facility at Harquahala Peak. Monitor also ensures that SCE provides notice at affected recreation areas, which inform the public of upcoming closure periods and alternate recreation areas.
Effectiveness Criteria	All construction activities are coordinated with and approved by the BLM. Public is aware of closure periods and alternate recreation sites.
Responsible Agency	CPUC; BLM, Palm Springs Office; BLM Phoenix Area Office.
Timing	Minimum 60 days prior to construction.
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>L-1a: Prepare Construction Notification Plan. Forty-five (45) days prior to construction, SCE shall prepare and submit a Construction Notification Plan to the CPUC and BLM for approval. The Plan shall identify the procedures SCE will use to inform property and business owners of the location and duration of construction, identify approvals that are needed prior to posting or publication of construction notices, and include template copies of public notices and advertisements (i.e., formatted text). To ensure effective notification of construction activities, the plan shall address at a minimum the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notice mailer. Fifteen (15) days prior to construction, a public notice mailer shall be prepared. The notice shall identify construction activities that would restrict, block, or require a detour to access existing residential properties, retail and commercial businesses, wilderness and recreation facilities, and public facilities (e.g., schools and memorial parks). The notice shall state the type of construction activities that will be conducted, and the location and duration of construction. SCE shall mail the notice to all residents or property owners within 300 feet of the right-of-way and to specific public agencies with facilities that would be impacted by construction. If construction delays of more than seven days occur, an additional notice shall be prepared and distributed. • Newspaper advertisements. Fifteen (15) days prior to construction, newspaper advertisements shall be placed in local newspapers and bulletins. The advertisement shall state when and where construction will occur and provide information on the public liaison person and hotline identified below. • Public venue notices. Thirty (30) days prior to construction, notice of construction shall be posted at public venues such as trail crossings, rest stops, desert centers, resource management offices (e.g., Bureau of Land Management field offices, San Bernardino National Forest Ranger Station), and other public venues to inform residents and visitors to the purpose and schedule of construction activities. For public trail closures, SCE shall post information on the trail detour at applicable resource management offices and post the notice within two miles north and south of the detour. For recreation facilities, the notice shall be posted along the access routes to known recreational destinations that would be restricted, blocked, or detoured and shall provide information on alternative recreation areas that may be used during the closure of these facilities. <p>Public liaison person and toll-free information hotline. SCE shall identify and provide a public liaison person before and during construction to respond to concerns of neighboring property owners about noise, dust, and other construction disturbance. Procedures for reaching the public liaison officer via telephone or in person shall be included in notices distributed to the public. SCE shall also establish a toll-free telephone number for receiving questions or complaints during construction and shall develop procedures for responding to callers. Procedures for handling and responding to calls shall be addressed in the Construction Notification Plan.</p>
Location	Construction activity in all segments.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE submits Construction Notification Plan, which identifies complete notification and public inquiry process.
Effectiveness Criteria	Residents and landowners are informed of construction activities; procedures established and documented for taking and responding to construction comments and concerns.

Table D.5-6. Mitigation Monitoring Program – Wilderness and Recreation

Responsible Agency	CPUC/BLM Phoenix, Yuma, and Palm Springs Field Offices.
Timing	Forty-five (45) days prior to construction for Construction Notification Plan.
IMPACT WR-2	Operation would change the character of a recreation or wilderness area, diminishing its recreational value (Class I)
MITIGATION MEASURE	<u>WR-2a: Coordinate with USFWS to improve impacted areas within Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.</u> SCE shall coordinate with the USFWS to improve impacted areas within the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The implementation of improvements would be conducted at the discretion of the authorized officer for the Kofa NWR, and may include the acquisition of private land in-holdings from willing sellers within the refuge boundaries, and the rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites and old roads within the refuge. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer of the Kofa NWR, and must demonstrate that negotiations and subsequent improvements have been conducted to the satisfaction of the USFWS. Documentation shall be submitted to the CPUC and the BLM at least 30 days prior to operation of the project.
<u>Location</u>	<u>Within the Kofa NWR.</u>
<u>Monitoring / Reporting Action</u>	<u>CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE negotiates with the USFWS to implement improvements to the Kofa NWR.</u>
<u>Effectiveness Criteria</u>	<u>SCE submits documentation to CPUC and BLM verifying that negotiations have been conducted to the satisfaction of the USFWS.</u>
<u>Responsible Agency</u>	<u>CPUC; BLM Phoenix, Yuma, and Palm Springs Field Offices; USFWS.</u>
<u>Timing</u>	<u>Minimum 30 days prior to operation.</u>
MITIGATION MEASURE	C-1g: Minimize impacts at Harquahala Peak. SCE shall consult with BLM's Phoenix Area Office to define and implement the most effective actions to reduce impacts of the proposed telecommunications tower at Harquahala Peak. Options for consideration shall include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCE shall design and finish the tower for the proposed new facility to emulate the existing facilities. In addition, the location of the proposed new tower shall be relocated to the place determined by BLM to minimize effects on the interpretive site. • SCE shall enhance or improve visitor facilities that provide historic interpretive information in order to better convey to the public the scientific contributions that the Observatory has made to history, and which make it worthy of NRHP listing Under Criterion • SCE shall consult with CAP and BLM to develop a co-located communications facility requiring only one tower to serve both parties. • Based on consultation with BLM, SCE shall relocate the laydown area to a site that minimizes effects on visitors to Harquahala Peak. After consultation with BLM on the options defined above, SCE shall submit a revised description of the Harquahala Peak facilities and laydown area along with detailed construction plans for review and approval by BLM's Phoenix Area Office at least 60 days prior to the start of construction.
<u>Location</u>	<u>At construction sites that occur within the following recreation areas: Harquahala Peak (and all associated recreational amenities), Eagle Eye Staging Area and Camp, and Harquahala Peak Pack Trail, and Harquahala Peak Road.</u>
<u>Monitoring / Reporting Action</u>	<u>CPUC/BLM monitor verifies that SCE communicates and coordinates fully with the BLM Phoenix Area Office to identify alternative recreation areas for visitors during project construction and ensure the most effective actions to reduce impacts of the proposed telecommunications facility at Harquahala Peak. Monitor also ensures that SCE provides notice at affected recreation areas, which inform the public of upcoming closure periods and alternate recreation areas.</u>
<u>Effectiveness Criteria</u>	<u>All construction activities are coordinated with and approved by the BLM. Public is aware of closure periods and alternate recreation sites.</u>
<u>Responsible Agency</u>	<u>CPUC; BLM, Palm Springs Office; BLM Phoenix Area Office.</u>
<u>Timing</u>	<u>Minimum 60 days prior to construction.</u>

Table D.5-6. Mitigation Monitoring Program – Wilderness and Recreation

IMPACT WR-3	Operation would permanently preclude recreational activities. (Class II)
MITIGATION MEASURE	<p>WR-3a: Coordinate tower and road locations with the authorized officer for the recreation area. Where the proposed route crosses the recreation areas listed below, SCE shall coordinate with the authorized officer to determine specific tower site and spur road locations in order to minimize impacts to recreational resources. This coordination shall occur no less than 30 days prior to the start of construction. SCE shall document its coordination with the authorized officer and shall submit this documentation to the CPUC and BLM prior to initiating project construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kofa National Wildlife Refuge • Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument • San Bernardino National Forest • Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail • San Jacinto Wilderness Area • Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket ACEC • Alligator Rock ACEC • Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard ACEC • Potrero ACEC • Norton Younglove Reserve
Location	At construction sites that occur within the following recreation areas: Kofa Area of Critical Environmental Concern National Wildlife Refuge, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, San Bernardino National Forest, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Alligator Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Coachella Valley Preserve and Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Potrero Area of Critical Environmental Concern, San Jacinto Wilderness Area, Norton Younglove Reserve.
Monitoring / Reporting Action	California Public Utilities Commission/Bureau of Land Management monitor verifies that SCE provides authorized officer for the recreation area with proposed tower locations across the resource. Monitor also ensures that SCE receives approval of tower locations or recommended relocation of tower site from authorized officer, and submits this approval to the CPUC and BLM.
Effectiveness Criteria	Authorized Officer for the recreation area approves proposed tower locations.
Responsible Agency	CPUC; BLM, Phoenix, Yuma, and Palm Springs Field Offices.
Timing	Minimum 30 days prior to construction.

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