3.12 Recreation

This section describes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project and alternatives with respect to recreation.

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

The environmental setting section describes the existing baseline wilderness and recreational conditions in the project area. The project area contains a number of natural resources conducive to wilderness status and recreational opportunities or experiences. Recreational opportunities can be defined as "favorable circumstances enabling visitors' engagement in a leisure activity to realize immediate psychological experiences and attain more lasting, value-added beneficial outcomes" (BLM 2005). Recreational experiences can be defined as "psychological outcomes realized either by recreation-tourism participants as a direct result of their on-site leisure engagements and recreation-tourism activity participation or by non-participating community residents as a result of their interaction with visitors and guests within their community and/or interaction with public and private recreation-tourism providers and their actions" (BLM 2005). Visual resources are frequently a key element of recreational experiences. The existing visual setting and potential impacts on visual resources in wilderness areas or on recreational opportunities in the proposed project area are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2, "Aesthetics and Visual Resources."

The EITP is located within the Eldorado and Ivanpah valleys in southern Clark County, Nevada, and the Ivanpah Valley in southeastern California. The proposed project would traverse areas within both California and Nevada and cross public and privately owned lands. All of the lands that would be crossed by the proposed transmission line route in California are administered by the BLM. Small segments of the Nipton 33-kilovolt (kV) line cross private parcels at Nipton, California, near the Ivanpah Road crossing, and in the vicinity of the Mountain Pass Substation. In Nevada, the line is predominantly situated on BLM lands, but private lands would be crossed near the Eldorado Substation and, depending on the alternative selected, possibly at Primm, Nevada.

Land uses within the area range from open space and conservation/preserve areas to commercial, public, and private recreation; utility/energy uses; industrial and mining uses; transportation; and limited residential uses. Lands in the project area with special designations that include recreational use are the Mojave National Preserve, wilderness areas, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Other areas used for recreation including Eldorado, Ivanpah, Roach, and Jean dry lake beds are present in the valleys. The Clark Mountains are on the far western edge of the proposed project location, and the foot of the Spring Mountains is to the north of the existing transmission line just above Primm, Nevada. At the east edge of the Ivanpah Valley in Nevada, the transmission line passes between Sheep Mountain to the north and the north end of the Lucy Gray Mountains and then passes through the northern McCullough Mountains. The telecommunication line alternatives pass to the west of the Highland Ranges and, farther south, pass between the McCullough and New York mountains.

Private developed land is located along the California/Nevada border in and near Primm, Nevada, and includes casinos and hotels, restaurants, a nine-hole golf course, and other tourist attractions. Recreational uses include casual and organized noncompetitive and competitive land-sailing on both the west and east sides of the Ivanpah Dry Lake bed and casual and organized non-competitive vehicle use on designated routes surrounding the dry lake bed.

3.12.1.1 Regional Setting

The EITP is in an area offering a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including widely dispersed public recreational areas that allow visitors to pursue activities in non-specific settings. The opportunities include caving, photography, painting, automobile touring, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, primitive camping, hiking, rock climbing, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Table 3.12-1 lists recreation opportunity areas within 0.5 miles of the EITP.

Table 3.12-1 Recreation Opportunity Within 0.5 miles of the EITP

Recreation Opportunity Area	Alternative/Route	Distance from Project (miles)	Nearest MP
BLM Lands	Alternative A	Less than or equal to 0.5	4.5–5.0
	Alternative C	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–5.0
	Alternative D	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–3.0
	Proposed Project	Less than or equal to 0.5	6.5–35.0
	Subalternative E	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–1.0
Boulder City Annexation	Alternative A	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–5.0
	Alternative B	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–6.0
	Proposed Project	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–7.5
Ivanpah Dry Lake	Alternative C	Less than or equal to 0.5	1.5–5.0
	Alternative D	Less than or equal to 0.5	2.0–3.0
	Proposed Project	Equal to 0.5	28.0–31.5
Primm Valley Golf Club	Proposed Project	0.5	27.0–28.0
Roach Dry Lake	Alternative C	Less than or equal to 0.5	0.0–1.0
	Alternative E	0.5	0.0
	Proposed Project	Less than or equal to 0.5	21.5–27.5

Key: See Figure 1-1.
MP = milepost

Public Lands – Bureau of Land Management

Most of the land crossed by the project is managed by BLM field offices in Needles, California, and Las Vegas, Nevada. Lands under the jurisdiction of the Needles Field Office are managed according to the goals, policies, and designations contained in BLM's 1980 California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, as amended. Lands under the jurisdiction of the Las Vegas Field Office are managed according to the goals, policies, and designations contained in BLM's 1998 Las Vegas Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Virtually all recreational activities on BLM lands depend on availability of access to recreational areas. Most visitors travel on previously used or designated motorized vehicle routes. BLM management of recreational activities, facilities, and visitor participation focuses on organized OHV events, permitted commercial and organized activities (bighorn sheep hunts, trail rides, vision quests), visiting specific local wildlife conservation sites (BLM 2002), and land-sailing and other wind-powered sports. Other recreational uses in the area include hunting, recreational shooting, and rock hounding. Occasionally, organized, permitted, motorized or non-motorized touring activities are authorized in the area (BLM 2002).

The CDCA Plan includes a Recreation Element that outlines approved recreational uses and designates specific recreational areas. Recreational activities identified in this element include dispersed recreation, nature study, hiking, and OHV use (within designated routes). The Las Vegas RMP also lists approved dispersed recreational activities, including caving, photography, automobile touring along public roads, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, primitive camping, hiking, rock climbing, OHV uses, and some water-based recreation. In addition, the Las Vegas RMP lists organized recreational activities, including model airplane fly-ins, rocketry events, dog field trials, horseback riding, bicycle events, and organized OHV events (BLM 1998). Both the CDCA Plan and the Las Vegas RMP designate specific areas as developed recreation areas, such as non-motorized trails, natural areas, and OHV routes. The proposed project traverses BLM-managed land included in the Northern and Eastern Mojave (NEMO) Management Plan, an amendment to the 1980 CDCA Plan. Recreational activities managed under the NEMO plan include OHV organized events, open areas, permitted commercial and organized activities such as bighorn sheep hunts and trail rides (BLM 2002), and land-sailing events on Ivanpah Dry Lake.

Wilderness Areas

The BLM manages congressionally designated wilderness and wilderness study areas within the NEMO planning area consistent with the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, the administrative instruments (regulations, policies, and so forth) from that statute, and other applicable federal statutes. These statutes identify management direction for these lands with respect to specific uses that may occur within a wilderness area (BLM 2002). The NEMO planning area encompasses all or portions of 24 areas of designated wilderness totaling 1,225,000 acres, eight wilderness study areas totaling 200,000 acres, and approximately 475,000 acres of "released lands." Wilderness areas traversed by the proposed project are discussed in detail in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources." Recreational uses allowed within wilderness areas include sightseeing, bird/wildlife viewing, photography, and hiking (BLM 2002).

Lake Beds

Dry lake beds provide the open space and smooth surfaces needed for such activities as land-sailing, model rocket and airplane flying, and hang gliding (BLM 2002). In addition to recreational activities occurring on lake beds, applications for filming and research are processed annually, particularly at Ivanpah and Silurian dry lakes (BLM 2002).

Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area

Ivanpah Dry Lake is just off of Interstate 15 (I-15) at the California/Nevada border, close to hotels, restaurants, and casinos. Ivanpah Dry Lake is a popular recreation destination for several kinds of recreational activities, including long-distance archery, kite buggying, and kite demonstrations. BLM issues approximately 250 casual use permits per year for recreational activities on Ivanpah Dry Lake (BLM 2009). Ivanpah Dry Lake has been specifically designated for non-motorized open-space recreational activities in the BLM's CDCA Plan. The lake bed is closed to motorized vehicles, except by permit, to prevent damage from other activities that could interfere with international wind-dependent events. The project would cross the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area within a BLM-designated utility corridor on an existing ROW between MPs 28 and 31.5. Transmission Alternative Route D would cross the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area within a BLM-designated utility corridor between Alternative D MPs 2 and 3.25, where it would reconnect with the proposed route's corresponding MP 30.

The Ivanpah Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA), a critical biological habitat area established by the BLM, encompasses Ivanpah Dry Lake and is south of the proposed project and alternatives and east of I-15. Staging areas that allow camping have been identified in this southern region overlay; however, land-sailing is not permitted. Land-sailing is permitted both within and outside the DWMA; however, staging activities associated with land-sailing events are prohibited inside the DWMA. South of the dry lake bed, the area is primarily used for very low-level, widely dispersed motorized recreational activities (BLM 2002).

Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area

Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area provides opportunities for casual use and other types of recreation, including motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle and 4 x 4 driving, horseback riding, mountain biking, small-game hunting, and organized racing events (BLM 2007). The EITP crosses BLM lands designated for this purpose within the CDCA.

Recreational Activities and Vehicle Access

The BLM has identified specific roads and trails where some type of motorized vehicle use is appropriate and allowed either seasonally or year-round. Primary uses include low-level, widely dispersed (i.e., recreation that occurs outside of developed sites) motorized recreational activities. The area is primarily a touring through-area rather than a destination for the general public because it provides a gateway from the east to the Mojave National Preserve. Other recreational uses in the area include hunting, recreational shooting, and rock hounding (BLM 2002).

Casual-use vehicle touring is one of the most popular forms of recreation in the NEMO planning area. Small informal group events occur on a regular basis throughout the planning area and are generally related to rock and mineral collection, bird watching, equestrian use, OHV touring, wind-driven vehicle use, camping, and hiking (BLM 2002).

There are about 100 permitted organized competitive vehicle events, involving about 25,000 participants, held each year in the CDCA. In the past only about 5 percent of the total number of yearly participants took part in the long distance point-to-point events (BLM 2002).

In California, the existing access road along the 115-kV transmission line provides the necessary access to construct the proposed action, and only one spur road would be constructed to access the new Ivanpah Substation (BLM 1980). There will be no changes to any current route designations. In Nevada, several new spur roads would be constructed to access new tower locations where terrain warrants. In Nevada, OHVs are an allowable use on established roads and trails unless otherwise designated (BLM 2010).

Boulder City Annexation

The Boulder City Annexation, in Clark County, is crossed by Transmission Alternative Routes A and B and contains areas of desert land as well as utilities and energy facilities. The Boulder City Master Plan designates this area as Energy, Utility, and Preserve, which allows recreation on designated recreation trails.

Private Recreational Areas

Private recreational areas are commercial operations on private property. The Primm Valley Golf Club is an example of a private recreation site within the project area. Commercial resort facilities in the Town of Primm include casinos, swimming pools, and a roller coaster.

3.12.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Standards

The following section provides a summary of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and standards that govern recreational resources in the project area.

3.12.2.1 Federal

California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended

The EITP crosses BLM lands designated as within the CDCA. The Recreation Element of the CDCA plan includes guidelines and requirements for recreational activities such as maintaining opportunities for recreational activities, minimizing land-use conflicts, accommodating visitors, and increasing public awareness of sensitive desert resources in the CDCA Planning Area (BLM 1980).

The 2002 NEMO Management Plan (BLM 2002a), an amendment to the 1980 CDCA Plan, sets guidelines and requirements for protection and preservation of CDCA lands, specifically in the northern and eastern Mojave Desert in southeastern California, which is crossed by the EITP. Provisions of the CDCA and NEMO plans are administered by the BLM.

Las Vegas Resource Management Plan, as Amended

The EITP crosses BLM lands managed under the Las Vegas RMP (BLM 1998). The RMP provides a comprehensive framework for managing resources within the planning area managed by the BLM Las Vegas Field Office, including maintaining opportunities for recreation as well as managing open spaces, trails, and parks and maintaining areas for OHV events on BLM lands. Provisions of the Las Vegas RMP are administered and enforceable by the BLM.

3.12.2.2 State of California

The EITP would be exempt from local land use and zoning laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards in California; however, in compliance with CPUC regulations requiring the utility to consult with local agencies on land use matters, SCE considered local land use plans. SCE reviewed the San Bernardino County land use plan described below.

County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan

The EITP would cross lands in San Bernardino County that are managed under the 2007 General Plan. The plan covers standards and policies for unincorporated areas within San Bernardino County.

3.12.2.3 State of Nevada

In Nevada, the EITP would cross Clark County and several unincorporated, populated areas.

The 2003 Nevada Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The EITP would cross lands in the State of Nevada subject to the management goals provided in the Nevada Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), developed by the Nevada Division of State Parks to increase and improve the quality of outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada. Although the SCORP does not issue requirements for compliance with its management goals, it describes recreational needs and issues for the state and provides strategies for improving the quality of recreational outlets based on the needs of the population (Nevada Division of State Parks 2003).

Nevada Revised Statutes

The EITP would cross lands in the State of Nevada subject to Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 501, supplemented by the Nevada Administrative Code, a Nevada state law that covers administration and enforcement of wildlife resources within the state. NRS 501 states that "the preservation, protection, management and restoration of wildlife within the State contribute immeasurably to the aesthetic, recreational and economic aspects of these natural resources" (NRS 501.100). NRS 455B.490 addresses the effect of provisions governing recreational areas on local ordinances and laws and regulations of the State of Nevada and does not prohibit "a county, city or unincorporated town from adopting ordinances that regulate a recreation area which are consistent with the provisions of NRS 455B.400 to 455B.490, inclusive." Provisions of the NRS are administered and enforceable by the State of Nevada.

3.12.2.4 Regional and Local

San Bernardino County

The EITP would cross lands in San Bernardino County that are managed under the San Bernardino County General Plan. Recreational facilities in San Bernardino County are managed by the Regional Parks Department; recreation goals and policies are outlined in the San Bernardino County General Plan's Land Use and Open Space Elements (San Bernardino County 2007).

Clark County

The EITP would cross lands in Clark County that are managed under the Clark County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's Recreation Element outlines standards and policies for county-managed parks, trails, and open spaces. Recreational areas and facilities designated under these plans are managed by the Clark County Parks and Community Services Department.

Boulder City Conservation Easement

The EITP would cross lands within the Boulder City Conservation Easement (BCCE), a high-priority conservation area in which development is severely limited. Established by the City of Boulder City (City of Boulder City 1994), the BCCE allows for passive use of land, including hiking and sightseeing. Regulations of the BCCE are enforceable under Boulder City Ordinance #972, Title 7, Chapter 5 (7.5-8), which lists prohibited activities, including traveling on a closed road and camping, within the easement. Vehicular travel is limited to designated open roads or private utility roads, and all open and closed roads are clearly marked.

3.12.3 Impact Analysis

This section defines the methodology used to evaluate impacts on wilderness areas and other resources providing recreational opportunities, including CEQA impact criteria. Definitions are followed by an analysis of each alternative, including a joint CEQA/NEPA analysis of impacts. A NEPA impact summary statement and CEQA impact determinations are provided at the conclusion of the discussion. For mitigation measures, refer to Section 3.12.4.

3.12.3.1 NEPA Impact Criteria

The NEPA analysis determines whether direct or indirect effects on wilderness and recreation resources would result from the project, and explains the significance of those effects in the project area (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1502.16). Significance is defined by Council on Environmental Quality regulations and requires consideration of the context and intensity of the change that would be introduced by the project (40 CFR 1508.27). Impacts are discussed in proportion to their significance (40 CFR 1502.2[b]). To facilitate comparison of alternatives, the significance of environmental changes is described in terms of the temporal scale, spatial extent, and intensity.

Under NEPA, the proposed project would have an adverse impact if it would disrupt access to existing recreation opportunities and/or reduce the number of Special Recreation Permits.

3.12.3.2 CEQA Impact Criteria

Under CEQA, the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would:

a. increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated,

b. include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment; or

c. disrupt access to existing recreation opportunities.

3.12.3.3 Methodology

To determine impacts that would result from construction, operation, and maintenance of the EITP on recreational opportunities in wilderness areas, the existing environment for recreation and wilderness resources within 0.5 miles of the proposed project area were evaluated against the NEPA and CEQA impact criteria noted above in Sections 3.12.3.1 and 3.12.3.2, respectively. Locations of recreational opportunities and wilderness areas were identified through several sources, including SCE (2009), U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps, BLM management plans, and consultation with wilderness and recreation specialists from the BLM Needles and Las Vegas field offices.

3.12.3.4 Applicant Proposed Measures

The applicant has included the following applicant proposed measure (APM) related to recreation:

APM REC-1: Recreation Area Closures. When temporary short-term closures to recreational areas are necessary for construction activities, the applicant would coordinate those closures with recreational facility owners. To the extent practicable, the applicant would schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods (e.g., holidays or tournaments). The applicant would post notice of the closure on site 14 calendar days prior to the closure.

3.12.3.5 Proposed Project / Proposed Action

Construction

During construction, the project could impact experience of recreational activities within the project area due to restricted access and/or disruption of recreational uses in certain areas. For example, there are four annual races that use trails in the Jean/Roach Dry Lake SRMA that could be affected by construction of the proposed project. These races are the Battle at Primm, the SNORE 250, the SCORE Terrible's Primm 300, and the Henderson Fabtech Desert Classic. The Battle at Primm race occurs annually in February, typically has around 270 participants, and attracts over 6,000 people. The 36-mile SNORE 250 race typically takes place annually in October, has between 90 and 120 racers, and attracts around 4,000 people (Cox 2009). The 69-mile SCORE Terrible's Primm 300 race occurs annually in September, the first weekend after Labor Day, typically has about 150 racers, and attracts over 10,000 people. Finally, the Henderson Fabtech Desert Classic race typically takes place annually in December, typically has approximately 120 racers, and attracts over 2,000 people (Best in the Desert 2010). MM REC-1 would require the applicant to coordinate project construction with the BLM and organizers of BLM-permitted race events to ensure that construction would not interrupt events. Because event use and ROW construction is not compatible, the applicant may be required to temporarily halt use of certain routes during events.

An approximately 5-mile-long segment of the proposed project route would be constructed within 0.5 miles of Roach Dry Lake and would cross the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area between MPs 28 and 31.5. Access to the northeastern area of the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area would therefore be temporarily restricted during transmission line construction. During the construction period, recreational users would not be allowed access to the construction right-of-way (ROW). To reduce impacts, the applicant would coordinate closures with recreational facility owners and schedule construction activities to avoid heavy recreational use periods to the extent practicable (APM REC-1). Also, the applicant has stated that they would post notices of closures on site 14 days prior to the closure. Implementation of MM REC-1 would further reduce impacts by limiting construction workspace, such as contractor yards, in wildlife and recreational areas. MM REC-2 would help reduce impacts to hunters in the McCullough Pass area by requiring that the southern ROW remain open for public access during construction.

For a discussion of visual impacts on recreational users within the project area, see Section 3.2, "Aesthetics and Visual Resources."

Operation and Maintenance

Because the proposed project is replacing an existing transmission line in a designated ROW, impacts during operation and maintenance would be similar to current operations. ~~Therefore, operation and maintenance activities would not affect recreation.~~ Additionally, the proposed project will not create any new vehicle routes that will be available for public travel. The applicant proposes using the existing road along the transmission corridor to access the project. The new spur routes that will be constructed to access new transmission tower locations will be posted with signage to limit traffic to "construction traffic only" during the construction phase of the project. MM REC-3 requires the applicant to coordinate with BLM Field Offices on appropriate signage to be displayed during

construction and operations to limit public access on these new dead-end spur routes. Existing OHV designations contained in the CDCA Plan and the Las Vegas RMP will not change as a result of the EITP.

Dry Lake Reclamation

Disturbance to dry lakes resulting from EITP construction, operation, and maintenance activities could include water flow modification that could alter dry lake surfaces, changes in the visual character of a dry lake, debris and waste introduced to dry lake surfaces, and modification of existing wind characteristics that could affect the experience of wind recreationists (e.g., wind sailing activities). The applicant has incorporated the following APMs to reduce impacts and adverse effects to the existing natural setting, including dry lake surfaces: AES-4, BIO-2, GEO-3, W-2, W-4, W-6 through W-9, and W-14. In addition, the following MMs, developed specifically to address site reclamation, would reverse disturbance to dry lakes resulting from the EITP to the greatest extent possible: MM BIO-2 (Vegetation and Soils Restoration), MM BIO-3 (Restoration Plan), and MM W-4 (Dry Lake Restoration Plan), if implemented.

NEPA Summary

The proposed project would cross the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area between MPs 10 and 27.5. Construction of the transmission line would temporarily restrict access to several trail segments in the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area; however, as part of the project (APM REC-1), the applicant would coordinate closures of recreational facilities with the facility owners and would schedule construction to avoid heavy use periods. Additionally, MM REC-1 would further reduce the impact to recreational users by requiring the applicant to locate extra workspace areas outside of Recreation Areas. Also, MM REC-1 would ensure that the applicant coordinate project construction to avoid interruption of BLM-permitted race events. ~~Therefore,~~ With the implementation of this MM, construction activities would be limited to the construction ROW and would be minor, short term, localized, and negligible. In addition, MM REC-2 would ensure that impacts to hunters in the McCullough Pass area would be reduced during construction, and MM REC-3 would ensure that the applicant coordinates with the BLM to post signage to clarify and limit public access on spur roads in the project area. No additional impacts to recreation or wilderness areas would occur as a result of project construction or as a result of operation and maintenance of the substation or telecommunications line.

CEQA Significance Determinations

IMPACT REC-1: Disruption of Access to Existing Recreation Opportunities
Less than significant with mitigation

Construction of the transmission line would temporarily restrict access to several trail segments in the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area; however, construction activities would be temporary and limited to the construction ROW. With implementation of APM REC-1, recreational facility closures would be coordinated with facility owners and construction would be scheduled to avoid heavy recreational use periods. Implementation of MM REC-1 would require the applicant to locate extra workspace areas outside of Recreation Areas and require construction coordination with the BLM and organizers of BLM-permitted events in the project area. Additionally, MM REC-2 would ensure that McCullough Pass' southern ROW remains open to the public during construction, thus reducing potential impacts to hunters in the area. With implementation of APM REC-1, MM REC-1, and MM REC-2, impacts to recreational opportunity access resulting from construction of the EITP would be less than significant. ~~Additionally, implementation of MM REC-1 would require the applicant to locate extra workspace areas outside of Recreation Areas, limiting construction activities to the construction ROW. Therefore, with implementation of APM REC-1 and MM REC-1, impacts to recreational opportunity access resulting from construction of the EITP would be less than significant.~~

NO IMPACT. Increased Use of Recreational Facilities. A maximum of 100 workers would be involved in construction at any one location at any one time. Construction workers would be working at several locations (spreads) along the proposed project route and could use nearby recreational facilities. Recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project may see an increase in use, but due to the small number of construction workers, this increase

would not result in substantial physical deterioration of any recreational facilities in the region or the acceleration of the physical deterioration of those facilities; therefore, there would be no impact under this criterion.

NO IMPACT. New Recreational Facilities. The proposed project would not include the construction or expansion of recreational facilities; therefore, there would be no impact to recreation for this criterion.

3.12.3.6 No Project / No Action Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed project would not be constructed. Therefore, there would be no adverse impact on wilderness or recreational areas.

3.12.3.7 Transmission Alternative Route A

Transmission Alternative Route A would bypass a segment of line that runs north and south near MP 2.0, approximately 0.83 miles in the Boulder City Conservation Easement, outside of the BLM-designated corridor as discussed in Section 3.9, "Land Use." The potential construction and operation impacts on wilderness areas and recreational opportunities of this alternative would be similar to those associated with the proposed project.

3.12.3.8 Transmission Alternative Route B

Transmission Alternative Route B would bypass a segment of line that runs north and south near MP 2.0, approximately 0.83 miles in the in the Boulder City Conservation Easement, outside of the BLM-designated corridor as discussed in Section 3.9, "Land Use." The potential construction impacts on wilderness areas and recreational opportunities of Transmission Alternative Route B are similar to those associated with the proposed project.

3.12.3.9 Transmission Alternative Route C

Transmission Alternative Route C would begin at the Eldorado Substation and follow the proposed route to the point where the line would reach the northeastern edge of Ivanpah Dry Lake (MP 28.5). This alternative, approximately 5.2 miles in length, would cross BLM land. Alternative C would be within 0.5 miles of and adjacent to Ivanpah and Roach dry lakes and would also be within 0.5 miles of the Town of Primm. This alternative would have construction impacts on wilderness areas and recreational opportunities similar to those associated with the proposed project, but this alternative would avoid construction impacts on Ivanpah Dry Lake. Construction impacts would be negligible and less than significant. There would not be any operational impacts associated with this alternative.

3.12.3.10 Transmission Alternative Route D and Subalternative E

Transmission Alternative Route D would begin at the Eldorado Substation and follow the proposed route to the point where the line would reach the northeastern edge of Ivanpah Dry Lake (MP 28). The line would be re-routed west and southwest on a new 130-foot ROW through the Ivanpah Dry Lake for approximately 3.3 miles before rejoining the existing ROW at MP 30. The line would parallel the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) Marketplace–Adelanto 500-kV transmission line as it crosses through Ivanpah Dry Lake. This alternative would cross BLM land for 3.2 miles and a northern portion of Ivanpah Dry Lake for approximately 1.0 mile, and would be within 0.5 miles of Roach Dry Lake and the Town of Primm. Subalternative E would cross private land for 0.7 miles, within 0.5 miles of BLM lands.

Both Alternative D and Subalternative E would reduce the overall transmission footprint, since the EITP towers would follow to the extent feasible the existing LADWP 500-kV ROW. Reducing the transmission footprint across the Ivanpah Dry Lake would leave more open space for recreation which would lessen the EITP's impact on recreation.

Construction of Alternative D would temporarily restrict access to the northwestern area of the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area, resulting in a short-term, moderate impact to the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area. Implementation of MM REC-1 would prevent construction activities from occurring during peak recreational use of the Recreation Area. This would reduce impacts, which would be adverse and unavoidable, to the Ivanpah Dry Lake Recreation Area to short term and minor. With this mitigation, the impact would be less than significant. Operational impacts associated with Alternative D and Subalternative E would be negligible.

3.12.3.11 Telecommunication Alternative (Golf Course)

The potential construction impacts on wilderness areas and recreational opportunities of the Golf Course Telecommunication Alternative would be similar to those associated with the proposed project. This alternative would require construction underneath the golf course surface during installation of telecommunication wires in an underground duct. Construction activities would not prohibit or restrict access to the Primm Valley Golf Club but could result in temporary and minor impacts from noise and dust. Impacts would be minimized through coordination of construction activities with golf course management personnel. The impacts would be negligible and less than significant. There would not be any operational impacts associated with this alternative.

3.12.3.12 Telecommunication Alternative (Mountain Pass)

The potential construction and operation impacts on wilderness areas and recreational opportunities of the Mountain Pass Telecommunication Alternative would be similar to those associated with the proposed project.

3.12.4 Mitigation Measures

MM REC-1: Limit Construction Workspace in Wildlife and Recreational Areas. The applicant will not site extra workspace areas such as contractor yards in Recreation Areas to minimize impacts on recreational users during construction. ~~MM REC-1 will not require any monitoring, reporting, or other similar action.~~ In addition, the applicant will coordinate with the BLM, as well as organizers of BLM-permitted races and events in the project area, to ensure that project construction will not interrupt events.

MM REC-2: Notify the Nevada Department of Wildlife of Any Road Closures During Hunting Season. To allow access for hunters in the area, the applicant will not close the southern right-of-way of the McCullough Pass during construction. The applicant will notify NDOW of any road closures during hunting season at least 30 days prior to closure.

MM REC-3: Display Appropriate "Closed" Signage for New Spur and Access Roads Constructed. The applicant will coordinate with BLM Field Offices on displaying appropriate "closed" signage at the entrance to new spur roads to tower locations and access roads. This includes temporary signs during the construction phase of the project and permanent signs and/or vehicle barriers that will close the spur routes to public travel.

3.12.5 Whole of the Action / Cumulative Action

~~Below is a brief summary of information related to recreation in the ISEGS Final Staff Assessment / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (FSA/DEIS) prepared by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the BLM. This section focuses on differences in the ISEGS setting and methodology compared with the setting and methodology discussed above for the EITP. This section also discloses any additional impacts or mitigation imposed by the CEC for ISEGS.~~

Information on recreation related to the ISEGS project is summarized below. The setting for the ISEGS project is described, followed by methodologies used and summaries of the impact conclusions presented in the California Energy Commission's (CEC's) Final Staff Assessment (FSA), Addendum, and Final Decision and the BLM's Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Required mitigation measures and conditions of certification are listed.

3.12.5.1 ISEGS Setting

The ISEGS project would be located in the Ivanpah Valley on a site currently accessible to the public and used to access hiking, hunting, and/or viewing areas in the Clark Mountains~~;~~, the Stateline and Mesquite Wilderness~~;~~, the Primm Valley Golf Course~~;~~, the Primm Casinos~~; or~~ , and the Ivanpah Valley and playa (see Section 3.12.1.2). Roads within and adjacent to the ISEGS site are used annually for the Los Angeles, Barstow to Las Vegas Dual Sport Motorcycle Tour. The ISEGS ~~Project~~ project would be ~~located~~ less than 2 miles west of the Ivanpah Dry Lake and about 4.5 miles southeast of the Town of Primm and would be within 0.5 miles of the Primm Valley Golf Course.

Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Standards

The BLM's FEIS and the CEC's FSA for the ISEGS project list~~s~~ the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the CDCA Plan, and the NEMO Management Plan as applicable to the ~~proposed~~ ISEGS project (see Section 3.12.2). ~~Because~~ Additionally, because the ISEGS project would be under the authority of the CEC~~, unlike the EITP,~~ as well as the BLM's FEIS and CEC's FSA~~/DEIS~~ lists the Warren-Alquist Act. Section 25529 of this act gives statutory authority to the CEC to require, as a condition of certification, that an area be established for public use when a facility is proposed to be located in the coastal zone or any other area with recreational, scenic, or historic value.

3.12.5.2 ISEGS Methodology

CEC FSA Methodology

To evaluate whether the ~~proposed~~ ISEGS project ~~and alternatives~~ would generate a potentially significant impact on recreational resources under CEQA, CEC staff evaluated the resources against checklist questions ~~posed~~ provided in the 2006 CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G ~~(see Section 3.12.3.2).~~ , Environmental Checklist established for Recreational Resources. These questions are:

A. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

B. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

BLM FEIS Methodology

Under NEPA, the ~~ISEGS FSA/DEIS assessed~~ BLM's FEIS assesses the significance of ~~the proposed project's~~ ISEGS's impact on recreational resources against NEPA-implementing regulations ~~at~~ in 40 CFR 1508.27 (see Section 3.12.3.1). Specifically, the BLM's FEIS evaluated whether the ISEGS project would result in impacts related to the following:

- Fencing of the project area, eliminating direct usage of the area for recreation;
- Modification of the visual character of the area, affecting the quality of the experience for certain recreational users; and
- Modification of wind or surface characteristics on Ivanpah [Drylake], thus affecting the quality of that surface in supporting land sailing and other recreational uses.

3.12.5.3 ISEGS Impacts

The CEC and BLM staff determined that construction, operation, and decommissioning of the ISEGS project ~~could impact~~ would be unlikely to have significant or adverse impacts on recreational resources, ~~particularly on Ivanpah Dry~~

~~Lake. Where impacts were identified, the CEC and BLM staff proposed mitigation measures to reduce~~ and that any impacts would be reduced to less than significant ~~levels~~ with the mitigation identified in Section 3.12.5.4.

CEC's FSA/Addendum Impact Conclusions

The ISEGS project would have no direct or indirect significant impacts to recreational resources under CEQA. The ISEGS project would not increase the use of parks or recreational facilities to the extent that physical deterioration of such facilities would occur. Additionally, the proposed project does not include the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, the ISEGS project would not have a significant impact based on either of the criteria listed above under Section 3.12.5.2. Additionally, although the proposed project would indirectly impact recreational uses by imposing a visual viewscape that might reduce the desert experience for some recreational users, and by re-directing traffic that currently uses existing roads within the ISEGS project area to access recreation destination, these impacts are not considered significant under CEQA.

BLM's FEIS Impact Conclusions

Construction Impacts

~~Construction of the ISEGS project could have a direct impact on recreational use of Ivanpah Dry Lake for land-sailing events if the facility resulted in any of the following effects: modification of water flow and sedimentation rates on the dry lake surface; or introduction of foreign materials (garbage, debris, or hazardous materials) to the lake surface; modification of wind characteristics. A direct impact could also result if the visual character of the facility were to present a distraction that could cause either a nuisance or a safety hazard for wind-sailors.~~

~~The ISEGS FSA/DEIS concludes that the ISEGS project is not expected to have significant impacts on recreational resources within the proposed project boundaries and would be unlikely to notably impact the characteristics of wind or the Ivanpah Dry Lake surface, which affects its use for land-sailing, with the implementation of suggested mitigation measures. However, there would be adverse impacts on recreational resources outside of the project boundaries because the quality of the outdoor setting would be diminished. Although the FSA/DEIS concludes that such impacts would be adverse, they are not expected to result in a decrease in recreational use of the area because users are generally focused on a specific recreational activity (e.g., land-sailing on Ivanpah Dry Lake, rock climbing on Clark Mountain, or hiking and camping in BLM wilderness), which would continue to be available without interruption.~~

The ISEGS project is not expected to have adverse impacts on recreational resources within the ISEGS project boundaries. This is because there are no substantial uses of the area for recreation, and the rerouting of the affected routes of travel around the ISEGS project boundaries is expected to cause only a minor inconvenience. ISEGS may adversely impact recreational resources outside of the project boundaries by diminishing the quality of the outdoor setting; however, these adverse impacts are not considered intense enough to cause visitation to decrease, because the recreationists are generally focused on a particular recreational experience, e.g. land sailing on Ivanpah Dry Lake, rock climbing on Clark Mountain, or hiking and camping in BLM wilderness, which would continue to be available. For example, although the ISEGS project area includes OHV trails, these are primarily used to access other areas. With re-routing of these trails around the facility, the ISEGS project would not result in an adverse impact to recreational access.

Operational Impacts

Impacts on recreation from the operation of ~~the~~ ISEGS would be similar to those discussed under Construction Impacts, above.

Decommissioning Impacts

Once the ISEGS generation plant operations end and all generation facilities and equipment were removed from the site, the site would be re-contoured and reclaimed to mirror the natural setting. Roads not needed for public access

through the area would be reclaimed during this time; roads that would be used by the public would remain open to vehicular use. Decommissioning of ISEGS would restore the ISEGS site to its former "natural" setting and the land would revert to pre-construction status, allowing the same types of pre-construction dispersed recreational uses.

3.12.5.4 ISEGS Conditions of Certification / Mitigation Measures

CEC Conditions of Certification

Conditions of certification are not required under CEQA, as impacts would be less than significant; however, to comply with the Warren-Alquist Act, the FSA proposes REC-1.

REC-1: Prior to the start of construction and in conformance with § 25529 of the Warren-Alquist Act, the project owner shall prepare plans for a Solar~~/~~ / Ecological Interpretive Center to be developed in the ISEGS Construction Logistics Area and submit ~~the plans~~ them to BLM's Authorized Officer and the CPM for review and approval. The plans shall propose a location that~~,~~ if possible~~,~~ provides a vantage point to observe as many features as is possible of the ISEGS project without compromising ISEGS security requirements. The Solar/Ecological Interpretive Center shall include the following features:

1. surfaced public parking for 12 vehicles (four of which would allow vehicles with trailers);
2. information kiosks describing ISEGS solar energy technology;
3. picnic area with eight shaded tables;
4. garbage cans;
5. interpretive signs identifying local landmarks and ecological features;
6. a two-stall contained restroom facility (or a facility with flush toilets and sinks);
7. a drinking fountain; and
8. native plant landscaping with plant identification labels.

Prior to commercial operation of the first constructed power plant of the ISEGS development, the project owner shall complete construction of the Solar /Ecological Interpretive Center and request final approval by both BLM's Authorized Officer and the CPM. The project owner shall operate and maintain the Solar /Ecological Interpretive Center for the life of the ISEGS project.

After commercial operation and in each Annual Compliance Report for the life of the ISEGS project, the project owner shall provide a summary of estimated public utilization of the Solar / Ecological Interpretive Center and summarize any issues associated with operation and maintenance activities.

BLM Mitigation Measures

The BLM recommends mitigation measures ~~to reduce impacts on Ivanpah Dry Lake:~~ HAZ-1 through HAZ-6, SOIL&WATER-5, and WASTE-1 through WASTE-7~~, and SOIL&WATER-5~~ to reduce impacts on Ivanpah Dry Lake. These impacts and mitigation measures are further discussed in this EITP FEIS in Section 3.7, "Hazards, Health, and Safety"; Section 3.8, "Hydrology and Water Quality"; and Section 3.11, "Public Services and Utilities," respectively. The BLM's FEIS also carried forward REC-1, although it is a CEC-specific requirement. REC-2, below, is a BLM-specific requirement, which was not included in the original combined CEC/BLM FSA/DEIS.

REC-2: The applicant shall allow and be required to afford public access to the routes for which BLM grants a right-of-way.

3.12.6 Combined Impact of EITP and ISEGS

The CEQA and NEPA EITP and ISEGS impact analyses for recreational resources were based on similar significance criteria that evaluated the extent to which the proposed projects would increase the use of recreational facilities, require construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or disrupt access to existing recreational opportunities.

The proposed EITP route would cross the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area and, during construction, would temporarily restrict access to several trail segments in that area, but the applicant would coordinate closures of recreational facilities with the facility owners and would schedule construction to avoid heavy use periods (APM REC-1). Additionally, MM REC-1 would further reduce impacts on recreational users by requiring the applicant to locate extra workspace areas outside of recreational areas. The proposed ISEGS project area is not substantially used for recreational purposes. Rerouting affected routes of travel around the ISEGS project boundaries to access recreation is expected to cause only a minor inconvenience. Rerouting is not expected reduce visitation for recreation.

The CPUC concluded that the temporary disruption of access to the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area would be less than significant with incorporation of MM REC-1. The agency concluded that the EITP would have no impact related to increased use of recreation facilities or the need for additional or expanded recreational facilities (Section 3.12.3.5, "Proposed Project / Proposed Action," "CEQA Significance Determinations"). The CEC concluded that the ISEGS project would have no direct or indirect significant impacts on recreational resources under CEQA (Section 3.12.5.3, "ISEGS Impacts," "CEC's FSA/Addendum Impact Conclusions").

The BLM concluded that construction activities for the EITP would be limited to the construction ROW and would be minor, short term, localized, and negligible. No additional impacts on recreation or wilderness areas would occur as a result of project construction or as a result of operation and maintenance of the substation or telecommunications line (Section 3.12.3.5, "Proposed Project / Proposed Action," "NEPA Summary"). Similarly, the BLM concluded that the ISEGS project would not have adverse impacts on recreational resources during construction, operations, or decommissioning. However, two ISEGS mitigation measures were included as conditions of certification. One would require that a Solar / Ecological Interpretive Center be developed, and the other would ensure that public access to BLM lands be maintained (Section 3.12.5.3, "ISEGS Impacts," "BLM's FEIS Impact Conclusions").

Together, impacts from the two projects would have a minor short-term contribution or less than significant contribution with mitigation to impacts on recreation in the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area due mainly to construction of the EITP. See also Section 5.3.11.4, "Cumulative Impact Analysis," for a discussion of cumulative impacts of restricting access to areas within the Jean/Roach Dry Lake Recreation Area.