

## 4.14 Recreation

The purpose of this Section is to identify existing recreation opportunities within the Project area, analyze potential impacts to recreation associated with the development of the proposed Project, and identify mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the significance of any identified impacts. Thresholds of significance for the impact analysis are derived from Appendix G of the 2011 *CEQA Guidelines*.

### 4.14.1 Environmental Setting

#### Regional Setting

The Project is located near Cadiz, California, an unincorporated community in the southeast Desert Region of San Bernardino County. The Desert Region includes a significant portion of the Mojave Desert and contains about 93 percent (18,735 square miles) of the land within San Bernardino County. The Desert Region is an assemblage of mountain ranges interspersed with long, broad valleys that often contain dry lakes.<sup>1</sup> The County has established numerous regional and community parks in the Desert Region, supporting recreational activities including hiking, camping, picnicking, and nature trails. **Table 4.14-1** lists the regional and community parks in the Desert Region.

**TABLE 4.14-1  
COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS AND COMMUNITY PARKS IN THE DESERT REGION**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
County Regional Parks	
Big Morongo Regional Park	183
Calico Ghost Town Regional Park	480
Mojave Narrows Regional Park	1,100
Mojave River Forks Regional Park	840
Mojave River Forks Regional Park	2,393
Subtotal:	4,996
Community Parks	
Big River Park and Recreation Site	14
Covington Park	3
Midway Park	16
Pioneer Park	12
Sugarloaf Park	6
Chet Hoffman	4
Subtotal:	55
<b>Total Regional and Community Park Acres</b>	<b>5,051</b>

SOURCE: County of San Bernardino, *San Bernardino County 2007 General Plan Program Final Program Environmental Impact Report*, February 2007, page IV-146.

<sup>1</sup> County of San Bernardino, *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan*, April 2007, pages VI-1, VI-3, VI-5.

## Local Setting

Public land in the Desert Region is managed by the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS), California State Department of Parks and Recreation, County Regional Parks Department, and local city Parks Departments.<sup>2</sup> The majority of the surrounding land in the Project vicinity is managed by BLM.

### **BLM Multiple-Use Classes**

The BLM has identified 4 Multiple-Use Classes (for BLM-administered lands only) in the Desert Region of which each identifies acceptable recreation uses. **Table 4.14-2** identifies the allowable recreational activities for each Multiple-Use Class. Because the Project is not on BLM land, these Multiple-Use Classes do not apply to the Project site. The lands immediately adjacent to the Project site are classified as Multiple-Use Class M, *Moderate Use*. Additionally, there are Class C (Wilderness), Class L (Limited), and Class I (Intensive) lands located near, but not on, the proposed Project. Each class of land is described in more detail below.

### **Class C (Controlled Use/Wilderness Areas)**

The Project site is in the vicinity of several Class C wilderness areas managed by BLM. **Figure 4.14-1** shows the locations of the 6 wilderness areas and BLM Multiple-Use Classes in the Project vicinity. BLM does not have records or data making public the number of people that use the wilderness areas for recreational purposes or the times and locations of when and where people use the wilderness areas.<sup>3</sup>

The Trilobite Wilderness Area is located approximately 4 miles north of the Project site. The Trilobite Wilderness Area covers approximately 31,160 acres, including a large segment of the Marble Mountains and alluvial fans. Much of this Wilderness Area is shielded from the Project site by the southern part of the Marble Mountains, which lie outside the boundary of this Wilderness Area.

The northeastern boundary of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area is located approximately 250 feet from a 5-mile segment of the proposed pipeline within the ARZC ROW (see Figure 4.14-1). The Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area consists of approximately 39,740 acres of sand dunes formed by winds from the Cadiz Dry Lake, which is located west of the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area.

The Sheephole Valley Wilderness Area is located approximately 7 miles west of the Project site and covers approximately 174,800 acres. Within this wilderness area are the Calumet Mountains, the Sheephole Range, and the Sheephole Valley that separates them.

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<sup>2</sup> County of San Bernardino, *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan*, April 2007, page VI-5.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Bureau of Land Management, *Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-Year Supply Program Final Environmental Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume I*, September 2001, page 5-272.

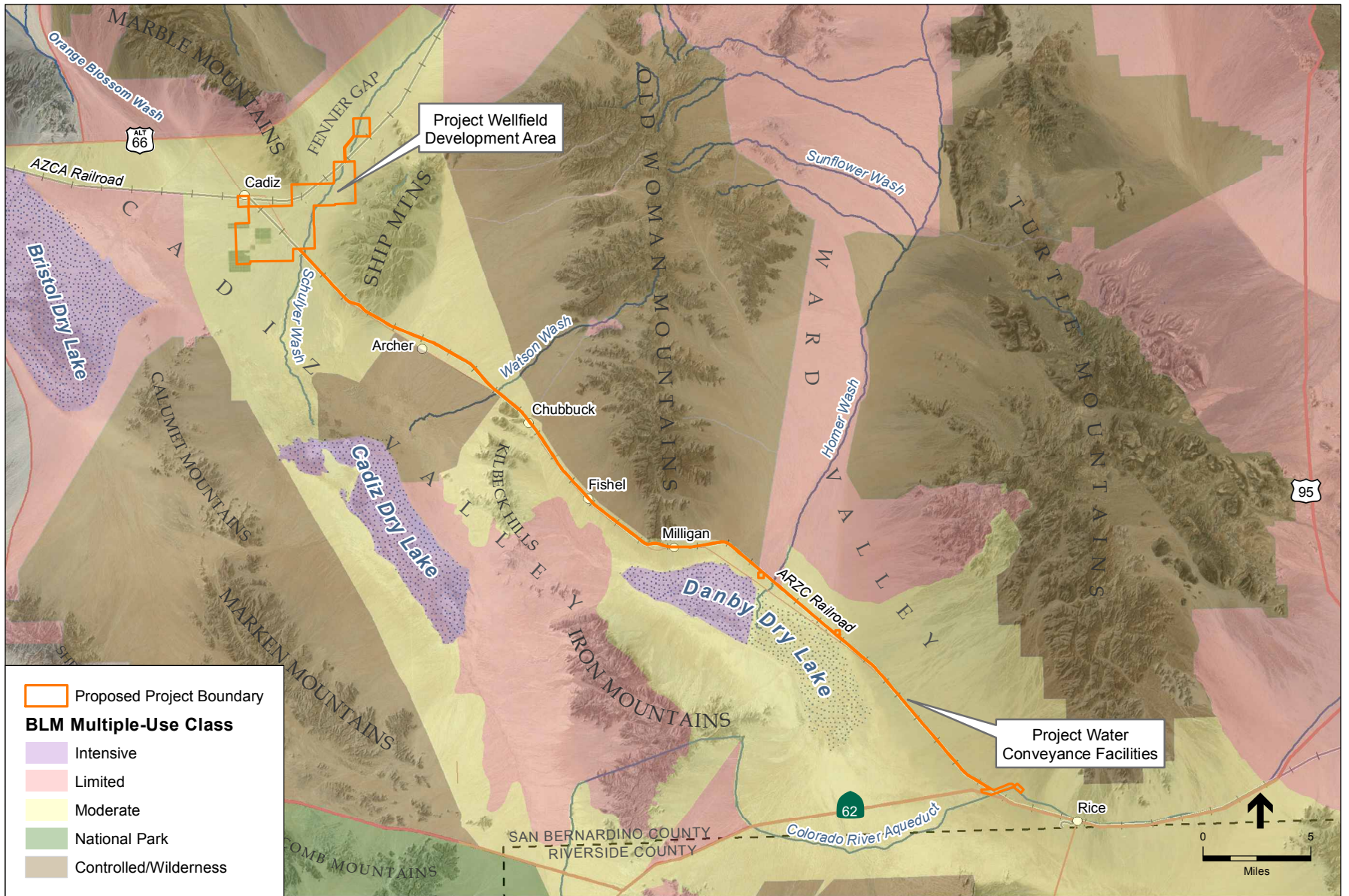
**TABLE 4.14-2  
CDCA GUIDELINES FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ALLOWED IN EACH OF THE MULTIPLE-USE  
CLASSES (BLM-ADMINISTERED LANDS ONLY)**

<b>Multiple-Use Class C <i>Controlled Use (Wilderness Mgt.)</i></b>	<b>Multiple-Use Class L <i>Limited Use</i></b>	<b>Multiple-Use Class M <i>Moderate Use</i></b>	<b>Multiple-Use Class I <i>Intensive Use</i></b>
<p>This class is suitable for non-mechanical types of recreational experiences which generally involve low to very low user densities. Recreational opportunities provided include, but are not limited to, the following characteristic activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• backpacking</li> <li>• primitive, unimproved site camping</li> <li>• hiking</li> <li>• horseback riding</li> <li>• rockhounding</li> <li>• nature study and observation</li> <li>• photography and painting</li> <li>• rockclimbing</li> <li>• spelunking</li> <li>• hunting</li> </ul> <p>Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health and safety may be allowed at the discretion of the authorized officer or in accordance with approved Wilderness Management Plans.</p> <p>Trails are open for non-vehicular use and new trails for non-motorized access may be allowed.</p>	<p>This class is suitable for recreation which generally involves low to moderate user densities. Recreation opportunities include those permitted in Class C plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• landsailing on dry lakes</li> <li>• noncompetitive vehicle touring and events only on "approved" routes of travel</li> </ul> <p>All organized vehicle events, competitive or not, require a permit specifying the conditions of use; these conditions will include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approved routes</li> <li>• no pitting, start, finish, or spectator areas</li> </ul> <p>Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health and safety are allowed.</p>	<p>This class is suitable for a wide range of recreation activities which may involve moderate to high user densities.</p> <p>Recreational opportunities include those permitted in Class L. Competitive motorized-vehicle events are limited to "existing" routes of travel and must be approved by the authorized officer. Pit, start, and finish areas must be designated by the authorized officer. All competitive events having 50 or more vehicles require permits.</p>	<p>This class is suitable for recreation activities which generally involve high user densities. A wide array of recreational opportunities will be found in this class. Offroad vehicle play will be allowed where approved and in open areas.</p> <p>Uses permitted are the same as Class M. In addition, motorized-vehicle play is allowed in areas designated "open." All aspects of competitive events will be permitted except where specific limitations are stipulated by the authorized officer.</p>

SOURCE: Bureau of Land Management, *Proposed Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report*, July 2002, page 3-55.

The 146,020-acre Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area is located approximately 6 miles east of the Project site. The southernmost boundary of the wilderness area is approximately 180 feet from a portion of the ARZC ROW (see Figure 4.14-1). Topography within this Wilderness Area ranges from 800 feet to 5,300 feet at the summit of Old Woman Peak.

The Turtle Mountains Wilderness Area is located approximately 3 miles to the east of the southern portion of the ARZC ROW and covers 182,626 acres of land.



SOURCE: Bing Maps, 2010; ESRI, 2010; Cadiz Inc., 2010; BLM-NECO Plan, 2002; and ESA, 2010

Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project  
**Figure 4.14-1**  
 BLM Multiple-Use Classes and Wilderness Areas

The Stepladder Mountains Wilderness Area is located approximately 15 miles north of the Project site and covers approximately 84,370 acres. This Wilderness Area is located north of the Turtle Mountains Wilderness Area and east of the Sunflower Wash.

### **Class L (Limited Use)**

Class L lands in the Project vicinity include areas of the Cadiz Valley and Ward Valley. Areas surrounding the Trilobite Wilderness Area, approximately 3 miles to the north, are Class L, as are areas bordering the Bristol Dry Lake (approximately 7 miles to the west), Cadiz Dry Lake (approximately 9 miles south), and areas to the north and east of the Old Woman Mountains (approximately 12 miles to the east).

### **Class M (Moderate Use)**

The proposed Project wellfield and pipeline are entirely surrounded by Class M lands.

### **Class I (Intensive Use)**

Class I lands in the Project vicinity include the Bristol Dry Lake (located approximately 7 miles to the west of the Project site), the Cadiz Dry Lake (located approximately 9 miles south), and the Danby Dry Lake (located approximately 20 miles southeast of the proposed wellfield area and 0.5 mile from the proposed water conveyance facilities that would be constructed within the ARZC ROW).

### **Competitive Recreation Route**

Almost 30 years ago, the Johnson Valley to Parker, Arizona Corridor (JV-Parker) off-road motorcycle race route traversed a portion of the proposed water conveyance facilities in the southern portion of the Project site, near the CRA. Last held in 1983, the JV-Parker historically had been sponsored by the American Motorcyclist Association. Before further races can be held, a new BLM permit would need to be obtained, which would require the preparation of a NEPA Environmental Assessment.<sup>4</sup>

### **Popular Rockhounding Areas**

Amateur geology, also known as rockhounding, is the recreational study and hobby of collecting rocks and mineral specimens from their natural environment. Rockhounding relies heavily on motorized-vehicle access, given the remoteness of many of the collection sites and the nature of the activity. Rockhounding areas near the Project site include parts of BLM's Trilobite Wilderness Area and Old Woman Mountains Wilderness Area.<sup>5</sup> This site is located north of SR 66 approximately 10 miles from the Project area. Construction and operation of the Project would not impede existing motorized-vehicle access to rockhounding collection areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Land Management, *Proposed Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan*, September 2002, page 3-59.

<sup>5</sup> California Desert.gov, *Places to Go Rockhounding in the California Desert*, <http://www.californiadesert.gov/actinfo.php?act=rh>, accessed October 2011.

### ***Camping & Off Highway Vehicles***

There are no designated camping or open areas designated for off-highway vehicles (OHV) in the vicinity of the Project site.

## **4.13.2 Regulatory Framework**

### **Federal**

#### ***U.S. Bureau of Land Management***

BLM, a federal agency within the DOI, is responsible for the management of public lands and resources on behalf of the American people. The BLM administers approximately 15 percent (15,007,475 acres) of California's public lands, 40 percent (6,076,378 acres) of which are located in San Bernardino County. Comparatively, the County consists of approximately 20,105 square miles, or 12,870,080 acres, such that approximately 47 percent of lands within the County's landholdings are managed by BLM.<sup>6</sup> BLM special management areas subject to specific BLM Plans within the County include the NECO Plan; CDCA Plan; and the West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan and California Desert Amendment. The CDCA and NECO Plan cover BLM lands surrounding the Project area.

#### **California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA) and Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert (NECO) Plan**

BLM lands are managed for multiple uses identified in the CDCA and NECO Plan, including natural resources, recreational, scenic, and open space opportunities. Table 4.14-2, above, describes the allowable recreational uses within each of the 4 BLM Multiple-Use Classes. Wilderness and recreation management is described in greater detail below.

#### **Wilderness Management**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires BLM to inventory and evaluate public lands for their wilderness potential. The BLM identified 137 areas covering 5.7 million acres which were determined to have wilderness characteristics; these areas were designated Wilderness Study Areas in May 1978. The CDCA and NECO Plan further refined the boundaries of these Wilderness Areas. **Table 4.14-3** lists the Wilderness Areas closest to the Project area.

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<sup>6</sup> County of San Bernardino, *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan*, April 2007, page VI-3.

**TABLE 4.14-3  
BLM WILDERNESS AREAS LOCATED IN THE PROJECT VICINITY**

Wilderness	Acres <sup>a</sup>
Cadiz Dunes	21,298
Old Woman Mountains	183,524
Sheephole Valley	195,244 <sup>b</sup>
Stepladder Mountains	84,370
Trilobite	39,693
Turtle Mountains	182,676

<sup>a</sup> Acres include federal, state, and private lands within wilderness area boundaries.

<sup>b</sup> Acres reported constitute the entire Sheephole Valley Wilderness, a portion of which occurs outside the NECO Planning Area.

SOURCE: Bureau of Land Management, *Proposed Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report*, July 2002.

The Project is adjacent to but not within any BLM Wilderness Management Areas. The FLPMA does not intend for protective perimeters of buffer zones to be imposed around any wilderness area. The fact that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from areas within a wilderness area shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area.<sup>7</sup>

### Recreation Management

The Recreation Management Plan Element allows for the management of various recreational activities, which are divided into High Importance (trail hiking, camping, nature study), Moderate Importance (horseback riding, picnicking, driving), and Low Importance (mountain biking, hunting, motorcycle/dirt bike/ATV use) based on a 1997 survey listed in the NECO Plan. Recreational activities such as hiking, camping, rock climbing and wind sailing are allowed near the proposed Project. The Project is not within BLM managed lands.

### National Park Service

NPS, a federal agency within DOI, promotes and regulates the use of national parks to conserve scenery and natural historic objects for future generations.<sup>8</sup> NPS manages 3 national parks within San Bernardino County including the Mojave National Preserve (approximately 30 miles to the north of the Project site), Death Valley National Park (approximately 100 miles to the northwest of the Project site), and Joshua Tree National Park (approximately 30 miles to the south of the Project site). The proposed Project is not located in a national park.

The Mojave National Preserve established in 1994 comprises 1.6 million acres north of I-40. The Preserve was established to protect the natural environment and cultural legacy of the eastern

<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Land Management, *Wilderness Act of 1974*, [http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely\\_field\\_office/blm\\_programs/wilderness/wilderness\\_act\\_of.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office/blm_programs/wilderness/wilderness_act_of.html), accessed January 2011.

<sup>8</sup> County of San Bernardino, *County of San Bernardino 2007 General Plan*, April 2007, page VI-5.

California desert region. Of the 1.6 million acres, 700,000 are designated Wilderness Areas and approximately half of the Preserve is critical habitat for desert tortoise. The Preserve is managed to facilitate recreational uses that are compatible with ecological preservation including camping and hiking. A museum and interpretive center has been established at the old railroad depot at Kelso. The Preserve plans to receive up to 200,000 visitors per year by the year 2016.<sup>9</sup> Unlike in National Parks, some hunting is allowed in National Preserves, including the Mojave National Preserve where the hunting of quail, mule deer, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife is allowed.

## **State**

### ***California Department of Parks and Recreation***

The California Department of Parks and Recreation manages over 270 park facilities. The California State Park closest to the Project area is the Providence Mountain State Recreation Area (SRA), which is located in the eastern Mojave Desert on the east side of the Providence Mountains, approximately 30 miles north of the Project site.<sup>7</sup> Providence Mountain SRA consists of approximately 5,900 acres and activities include hiking, biking, camping, and organized exhibits. The proposed Project is not located in a California State Park.

## **Local**

### ***San Bernardino County Regional Parks***

The County of San Bernardino Department of Regional Parks manages recreational facilities throughout the County. There are no County regional parks in close proximity to the Project area. The closest regional park is located in the Mojave River Watershed approximately 120 miles to the west.

## **4.14.3 Impact and Mitigation Analysis**

### **Significance Criteria**

Based on the *CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G*, a project may be deemed to have a significant effect on the environment with respect to recreation if it would:

- Adversely affect the recreational experience of established recreational facilities;
- 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; or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

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<sup>9</sup> National Park Service, *Mojave National Preserve, General Management Plan*, 2002, page 75.



## Methodology

The Project was evaluated to assess its proximity to designated recreational facilities and public access open space.

## Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component

### *Disruption of Recreational Facilities*

#### Significance Threshold

Would the proposed Project adversely affect the recreational experience of established recreational facilities?

#### Impact Analysis

##### Construction of Wellfield and Conveyance Facilities

The Project is not located in the vicinity of County or State recreational facilities or parks. There are no developed camping areas near the Project area. There are several BLM Wilderness Areas located in close proximity to the Project site. Specifically, the Trilobite Wilderness is located approximately 4 miles north of the Project site; the Old Woman Mountains is approximately 180 feet to the east of a portion of the ARZC ROW, within which proposed water conveyance facilities would be constructed. The Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Area is 5 miles south of the Project and approximately 250 feet west of the central portion of the ARZC ROW. The Turtle Mountains is located approximately 3 miles east of the intersection of the ARZC ROW and the CRA.

Construction activities would be visible from distant vista points in the surrounding Wilderness Areas, but would not substantially affect scenic vistas. The pipeline construction would follow the railroad alignment which would minimize the visual impact.

The proposed Project has been designed to completely avoid all BLM lands, including Wilderness Areas. Construction of the proposed Project would not disrupt recreational opportunities and uses. The public would continue to have access to BLM lands in areas where public access is currently provided. Therefore construction related impacts are considered less than significant.

##### Operation

Once constructed, the underground pipeline would not be visible. The wellfield area would be visible from distant views but would not disrupt the expansive vistas from higher elevations (see Section 4.1, Aesthetics).

Operation of the Project would not generate noise or nighttime lighting that could disrupt distant Wilderness Area visitors (see Sections 4.1, Aesthetics and 4.12, Noise). Operation of the Project would not disrupt recreational opportunities and the public would continue to have access to BLM lands in areas where public access is currently provided. Therefore, the Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component would result in a less than significant impact to existing recreational facilities.

**Mitigation Measures**

None required.

**Significance Conclusion**

Less than significant.

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***Deterioration of Recreational Facilities***

**Significance Threshold**

Would the proposed 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?

**Impact Analysis**

The Project would be located on lands and easements that are privately owned by Cadiz, Metropolitan, and ARZC and would not encroach onto BLM lands. Construction and operation of the proposed Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. The Project would not require residential development in the Project area nor result in a substantial number of new, long-term, full-time employees that would reside in or near the Project site and potentially recreate in the Project vicinity. The Project would not promote or increase public access to undeveloped lands. The Project is not located in the vicinity of County or State recreational facilities or parks. There are no developed camping areas near the Project site. As a result, the Project would not result in an increase in the physical deterioration of existing park or recreational facilities.

**Mitigation Measures**

None required.

**Significance Conclusion**

No impact.

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***New Recreational Facilities***

**Significance Threshold**

Would the proposed Project include recreational facilities or required the construction or expansion or recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

**Impact Analysis**

The Project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities. The proposed Project has been designed to completely avoid adjacent BLM lands, including designated Wilderness Areas. Construction of the proposed Project would not conflict with recreational uses in the Project vicinity, and access to BLM lands allowing recreation would be unimpeded throughout construction and operation. Therefore, the Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component of the proposed Project would not have adverse environmental impacts on recreational areas.

**Mitigation Measures**

None required.

**Significance Conclusion**

No impact.

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**Imported Water Storage Component**

This component is analyzed on a programmatic basis.

***Disruption of Recreational Facilities*****Significance Threshold**

Would the proposed Project adversely affect the recreational experience of established recreational facilities?

**Impact Analysis**

Similar to the Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component, the Project is not located in the vicinity of County or State recreational facilities or parks. Construction activities would be visible from distant vista points in the surrounding Wilderness Areas, but would not substantially affect scenic vistas. The expanded wellfield and spreading basin would be visible from distant views but would not disrupt the expansive vistas from higher elevations (see Section 4.1, Aesthetics). The existing natural gas pipeline extending from the Cadiz Property to Barstow is not located in the vicinity of County or State recreational facilities or parks. Operation of the Project would not generate noise or nighttime lighting that could disrupt distant Wilderness Area visitors (see Sections 4.2, Aesthetics and 4.12, Noise). Therefore, the Imported Water Storage Component would result in a less than significant impact to existing recreational facilities.

**Mitigation Measures**

None required.

### **Significance Conclusion**

Less than significant.

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### ***Deterioration of Recreational Facilities***

#### **Significance Threshold**

Would the proposed 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?

#### **Impact Analysis**

As with the Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component, construction and operation of the Imported Water Storage Component would not increase the use of regional parks or other recreational facilities that could result in deterioration of facilities.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

None required.

### **Significance Conclusion**

No impact.

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### ***New Recreational Facilities***

#### **Significance Threshold**

Would the proposed Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

#### **Impact Analysis**

The Imported Water Storage Component does not include recreational facilities or require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities. The proposed Project has been designed to completely avoid adjacent BLM lands, including designated Wilderness Areas. Construction of the proposed Project would not conflict with recreational uses in the Project vicinity, and access to BLM lands allowing recreation would be unimpeded throughout construction and operation. Therefore, the Imported Water Storage Component of the proposed Project would not have adverse environmental impacts on recreational areas.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

None required.

**Significance Conclusion**

No impact.

**Mitigation Measure Summary Table**

Table 4.14-4 presents the impacts and mitigation summary for Recreation.

**TABLE 4.14-4  
 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION SUMMARY**

<b>Proposed Project Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure</b>	<b>Significance Conclusion</b>
<b>Groundwater Conservation and Recovery Component</b>		
Disruption of Recreational Facilities	None required	Less than significant
Deterioration of Recreational Facilities	None required	No impact
New Recreational Facilities	None required	No impact
<b>Imported Water Storage Component</b>		
Disruption of Recreational Facilities	None required	Less than significant
Deterioration of Recreational Facilities	None required	No impact
New Recreational Facilities	None required	No impact