Negative Declaration

Owens Gorge Flow Restoration Project

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AF	acre-feet
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
cfs	cubic feet per second
CGPP	Control Gorge Power Plant
CH_4	methane
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
GBUAPCB	Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District
GCSWP	General Construction Storm Water Permit
GHG	greenhouse gas
LADWP	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
MGPP	Middle Gorge Power Plant
N_2O	nitrous oxide
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
UGPP	Upper Gorge Power Plant
US 395	United States Highway 395
USFWS	United State Fish and Wildlife Service

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SECTION 1
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Overview of the Project

Based on a series of agreements between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Mono County, the State of California, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), LADWP proposes to implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition in portions of the Owens River Gorge (Gorge) below the Upper Gorge Power Plant (UGPP). This would satisfy the requirements of the California Department of Fish and Game Code Section 5937. The proposed project is intended to enhance the riverine-riparian habitat in the Gorge, while simultaneously maintaining LADWP's power generation and transmission and water storage and distribution capabilities. The proposed project involves implementation of a flow release schedule in the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge between the UGPP and the Control Gorge Power Plant (CGPP) in response to civil action No. 10088 initiated by the Mono County District Attorney.

1.2 California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to proposed projects initiated by, funded by, or requiring discretionary approvals from State or local government agencies. The Owens Gorge Flow Restoration Project constitutes a project as defined by CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). The CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 states that Lead Agency is "the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project." Therefore, LADWP is the lead agency responsible for compliance with CEQA for the proposed project.

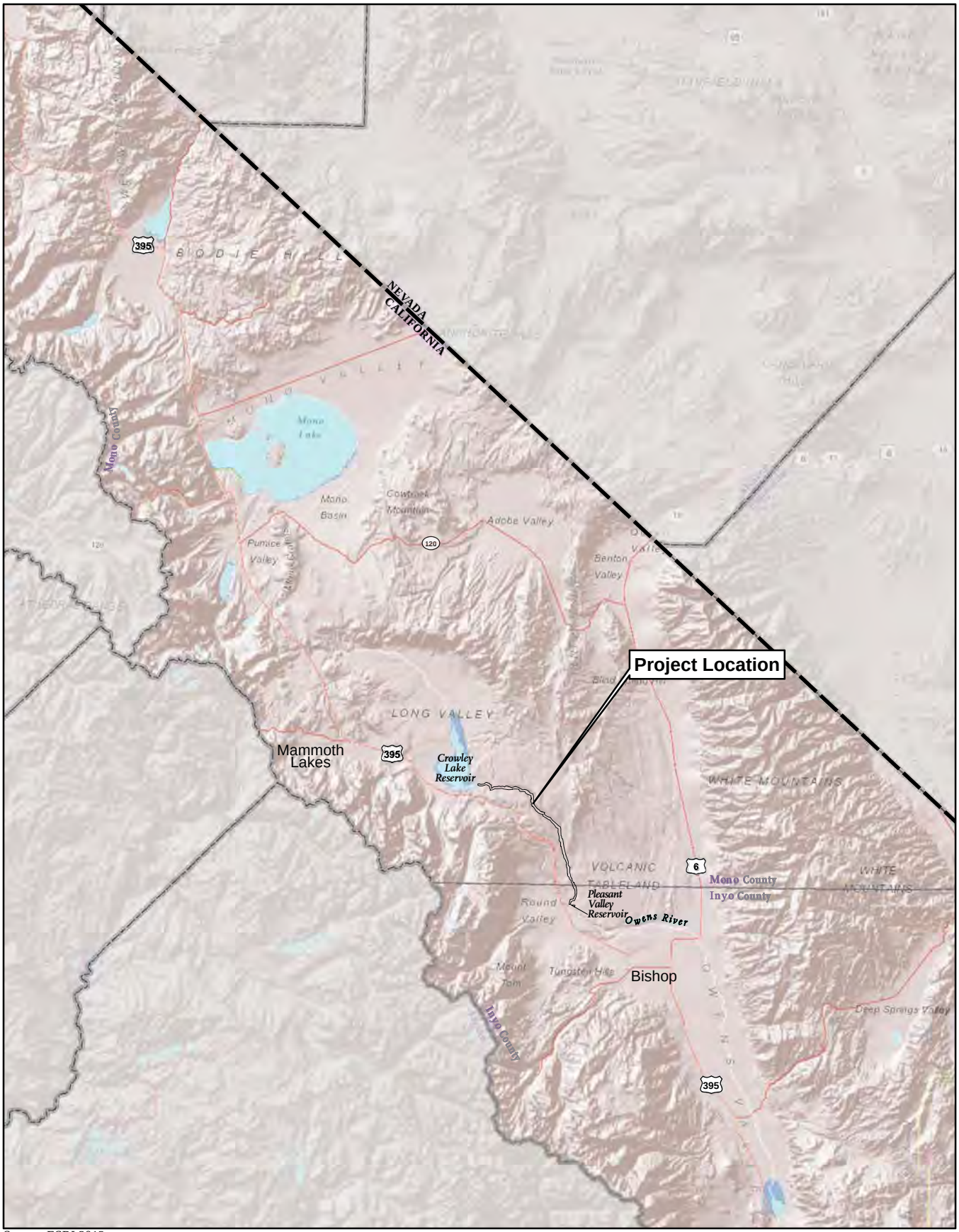
As lead agency for the proposed project, LADWP must complete an environmental review to determine if implementation of the project would result in significant adverse environmental impacts. To fulfill the purpose of CEQA, an Initial Study has been prepared to assist in making that determination. Based on the nature and scope of the proposed project and the evaluation contained in the Initial Study environmental checklist (contained herein), LADWP, as the lead agency, has concluded that a Negative Declaration would be the proper environmental document for this project. The Initial Study shows that impacts caused by the proposed project would be less than significant. This conclusion is supported by CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, which states that a Negative Declaration can be prepared when "(a) the initial study shows that there is not substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or (b) the initial study identifies potentially significant effects, but (1) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur; and (2) there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment."

1.3 Project Location, History, and Setting

The Gorge is located between Crowley Lake Reservoir, in southwest Mono County, and Pleasant Valley Reservoir, in northwest Inyo County, California. Crowley Lake Reservoir was created as a water supply reservoir in 1941 when LADWP dammed the Owens River at Long Valley. Water originating in Crowley Lake Reservoir and traversing the Gorge eventually enters the Los Angeles Aqueduct (located in the Owens Valley about 35 miles southeast of Pleasant Valley Reservoir), providing a significant amount of the drinking water supply to the LADWP service area. Long Valley Dam is located approximately 15 miles southwest of the community of Mammoth Lakes (Mono County), and Pleasant Valley Dam is located approximately 8 miles northwest of the City of Bishop (Inyo County). Figure 1 shows the regional location of the proposed project. Crowley Lake Reservoir, Pleasant Valley Reservoir, and the Gorge are located entirely on property under the ownership and jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles. In general, the LADWP Gorge property is bounded on both sides by either United States Forest Service property (Inyo National Forest) or United States Bureau of Land Management property.

From Long Valley Dam to Pleasant Valley Reservoir, the Gorge extends roughly from northwest to southeast. There is a total elevation drop within the Gorge of approximately 2,400 feet from Crowley Lake Reservoir to Pleasant Valley Reservoir. In the early 1950s, LADWP built a succession of hydroelectric power generation plants within the Gorge to take advantage of the potential energy created by this elevation difference. The UGPP is located approximately 9 miles downstream of Long Valley Dam; the Middle Gorge Power Plant (MGPP) is located approximately 3 miles downstream of the UGPP; and the CGPP is located approximately 7 miles downstream of the MGPP, a total distance of approximately 19 miles. The location of each power plant was determined based on the change in elevation between sites, with an approximate 800 foot drop between Long Valley Dam and each successive downstream power plant. Each plant has a generation capacity of 37.5 megawatts. As small hydroelectric power facilities, these power plants provide approximately 7 percent of LADWP's current renewable energy generation capacity.

In order to maintain a hydraulic head appropriate for the generation of hydroelectric power at each plant and to regulate the volume and rate of flow to each plant as required for power generation, a series of 10-foot diameter tunnels and penstocks (i.e., pipelines delivering water to the hydroelectric turbines) was constructed to link, in succession, Crowley Lake Reservoir to the UGPP, the UGPP to the MGPP, and the MGPP to the CGPP. The tunnel and penstock system can transfer water between Crowley Lake Reservoir and the various power plants at a maximum flow capacity of approximately 680 cubic feet per second (cfs). From 1953, when the hydroelectric plants began operation, water that previously entered the Gorge from Crowley Lake Reservoir was diverted to the tunnel at Long Valley Dam. While the upper reach of the Gorge from Long Valley Dam to the UGPP has continued to receive some water from Crowley Lake Reservoir via normal seepage from the dam and from springs within this reach, the Gorge was effectively dewatered in the middle reach (between the UGPP and the MGPP) and the lower reach (between the MGPP and the CGPP) after the tunnel and penstock system was placed into operation. Below the CGPP, the water was returned to the Owens River channel upstream of Pleasant Valley Reservoir. The proposed project encompasses the approximately 10-mile segment of the Gorge from the UGPP to the CGPP. Figure 2 shows the project location and existing facilities.



Source: ESRI 2012

N

0 5 10 15 20 Miles

Figure 1
Regional Location Map

Source: ESRI 2012

N

0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Figure 2
Project Location Map

Dewatering of the segment of the Gorge between the UGPP and the CGPP substantially altered the natural ecosystem of the middle and lower reaches, which prior to the construction of Long Valley Dam were subject to natural flows from the upstream watershed, including peak flows in the spring and summer. After the construction of the dam (but prior to the diversion of water through the tunnels and penstocks), the middle and lower reaches were subject to regulated but still relatively constant flows related to releases from Crowley Lake Reservoir to supply water to the Los Angeles Aqueduct. After the diversion to the tunnel and penstock system in 1953, the river channel of the Gorge between the UGPP and the CGPP was transformed from a riverine and riparian habitat to essentially a dry wash.

However, in 1991, the CGPP penstock (i.e., the penstock feeding the CGPP) ruptured, reintroducing water into the lower reach of the Gorge and leading to the reestablishment of a fish population in the lower reach. Based on negotiations between LADWP, CDFW, Mono County, and the State of California stemming from the penstock rupture and the reintroduction of water into a previously dry section of the Gorge, LADWP established a base flow of approximately 36 cfs in the Gorge below the UGPP. Due to this release as well as several years of test studies in the mid-1990s and early 2000s that also introduced seasonal peak flows into the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge, riparian vegetation has established along the channel in this segment of the river.

The floor of the Gorge in the proposed project segment is between approximately 50 and 125 feet wide. The walls of the Gorge are steep rocky cliffs or talus extending several hundred feet above the river bottom. The river channel extends from wall to wall in a few locations, but characteristically covers about half of the Gorge's bottom width. Vegetation along the river includes species such as red willow (*Salix laevigata*), sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*), and Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*). Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Owens sucker (*Catostomus fumeiventris*) are the primary fish species present in the proposed project segment of the river.

The Owens River between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP has a lesser gradient than in the Gorge downstream of the UGPP. The Gorge itself in this area is wider and the walls are less steep and less rocky than downstream of the UGPP. As mentioned above, this reach of the Owens River has continued to receive some water from seepage from Long Valley Dam and springs even after the diversion of water to the Gorge power plants in the middle of the last century. This has provided an environment suitable to sustain the Owens tui chub (*Siphateles bicolor snyderi*), a fish species listed as endangered by the State and federal governments. The Gorge in the upper reach between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP has been designated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as critical habitat for the Owens tui chub.

In addition to the hydroelectric turbines and generators, the Gorge power plants include switchgear and other generation support equipment and structures. The power plants each have a large tailbay that captures water as it exits the generation facilities; at the UGPP and the MGPP, the water is redirected from the tailbay into the next tunnel segment. Other structures in the Gorge related to the power generation function include aboveground penstocks leading to the power plants and several transmission towers, some of which are located immediately adjacent to the riverbank. At the CGPP, there are a number of residences to provide housing for LADWP power generation personnel. There are two public restroom facilities located between the UGPP and the MGPP. Several paved and unpaved roads are located in the Gorge to provide for LADWP vehicle access, which must be maintained at all times to the power generation facilities to support operations and

maintenance activities. A concrete spillway structure is located approximately 0.1 miles upstream of the CGPP, creating a barrier to prevent the passage of fish from Pleasant Valley Reservoir into the Gorge.

The Gorge property is generally open to the public but is accessible only by foot; locked gates located on the roads at the upper edge of the Gorge limit access to authorized vehicles only. Although the Gorge is not heavily utilized, partly because of the lack of vehicular access, recreation activities in the proposed project segment include fishing, rock climbing, birding, and hiking. Other than the facilities noted in the above paragraph, there is no development within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project segment.

1.4 Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction Regarding Owens River Gorge Flows

On January 25, 1974, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued License 10190 to LADWP confirming the City of Los Angeles's right to divert water from the Owens River at Long Valley Dam for the purpose of hydroelectric power generation. This license was issued pursuant to Permit 5552, which was issued on June 1, 1940, by the SWRCB's predecessor agency, authorizing the diversion of water by the City of Los Angeles from the Owens River in Mono County. However, License 10190 was issued in 1974 without incorporating provisions from Fish and Game Code Section 5937, which requires dam owners to allow "sufficient water at all times to pass … over, around or through the dam, to keep in good condition any fish that may be planted or exist below the dam." Such incorporation of Section 5937 is required under Fish and Game Code Section 5946, which establishes that "no permit or license to appropriate water in [Fish and Game] District 4 1/2 [within which the Gorge is located] shall be issued by the State Water Rights Board after September 9, 1953, unless conditioned upon full compliance with Section 5937."

Although the omission of the Section 5937 conditions represented a technical violation of the provisions contained in Section 5946, no actual harm to fisheries resources occurred as a result of the issuance of License 10190 in 1974 because the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge (between the UGPP and the CGPP) were essentially dewatered and did not support viable fish populations, and the upper reach of the Gorge (between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP) continued to receive sufficient water to support a population of Owens tui chub.

Following the rupture of the CGPP penstock in 1991, the Mono County District Attorney, on behalf of the People of the State of California, filed civil action No. 10088 in Mono County Superior Court on April 11, 1991, against LADWP and the SWRCB. This action sought to restore flows to the Gorge to comply with Fish and Game Code Section 5937. On May 3, 1991, the Mono County Counsel, on behalf of the County of Mono, joined as a plaintiff in this civil action. Subsequent to the filing of this civil action and based on prior court rulings, the SWRCB exercised its ministerial authority to establish conditions of compliance with Section 5937 for water rights licenses. On June 16, 1991, the SWRCB amended LADWP's License 10190 as follows: "In accordance with the requirements of Fish and Game Code Section 5946, this license is conditioned upon full compliance with Section 5937 of the Fish and Game Code."

However, the license amendment did not establish the level of instream flows required to comply with Section 5937. Instead, LADWP was directed to consult with the SWRCB,

CDFW (then known as the California Department of Fish and Game), and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine suitable flows. Civil action No. 10088 and the amendment to License 10190 resulted in several years of cooperative studies to determine the appropriate flows to keep fish in good condition per Section 5937. During this time, LADWP agreed to negotiate an Interim Flow Agreement with Mono County. In anticipation of the Interim Flow Agreement, LADWP began in June 1991 releasing 16 cfs of water from the UGPP into the proposed project reaches as a first step toward rewatering the Gorge. A final Interim Flow Agreement was signed by the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners in June 1994. The Interim Flow Agreement provided for gradually increasing the instream flow in the proposed project segment of the Gorge during a rehabilitation period. Under the Interim Flow Agreement, the established target flows were subject to adjustment, both in size and timing, on the basis of periodic technical and policy reviews by CDFW intended to evaluate the effects of various flow levels and gain an understanding of what final flows CDFW would deem appropriate for keeping fish in good condition, pursuant to Section 5937.

To establish the permanent flow regime in the proposed project segment of the Gorge and to resolve civil action No. 10088, the Mono County District Attorney, Mono County Counsel, LADWP, and CDFW (the Parties) have prepared a Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction; Order of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction (Stipulation and Order). The Stipulation and Order specifies a schedule for the rate and timing of average monthly base flows and seasonal peak flows. These flows were established by CDFW as volumes intended to restore the role of seasonal and inter-annual flow variations in the river ecosystem processes. The Stipulation and Order also provides for annual fluctuations in the base flows over a 10-year cycle and the peak flows over a 20-year cycle. It is expressly agreed by the Parties that the specified flows would satisfy the requirements of Fish and Game Code Section 5937 relative to maintaining fish populations in good condition in the proposed project reaches of the Gorge and, thereby, resolve civil action No. 10088. The Stipulation and Order further requires the installation of a fishway to allow the upstream passage of fish during base flow conditions at the existing fish barrier located on the river upstream of the CGPP. In addition, the Stipulation and Order permits LADWP to complete inspections and repairs to the Gorge water conveyance and power generation facilities as required to maintain the facilities in appropriate operating condition. Pending adoption of this Negative Declaration and consideration and approval of the proposed project by the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners, the Stipulation and Order would be entered by the Mono County Superior Court. The proposed flow release schedule and other requirements of the Stipulation and Order within the Gorge are outlined in Section 1.6 below.

1.5 Project Objectives

The objectives of the proposed project are to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition in portions of the Gorge to satisfy the requirements of the Fish and Game Code Section 5937, while simultaneously maintaining LADWP's power generation and transmission capabilities related to the Gorge power plants and water storage and distribution capabilities related to Crowley Lake Reservoir. It is also the intent of the proposed project to not affect the upper reach of the Gorge between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP so as to continue to protect the Owens tui chub. The proposed project is intended to enhance the riverine-riparian habitat in the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge. The establishment and maintenance of a fishery in good condition in the middle and lower

reaches would be achieved through the controlled release of water into the Gorge at the UGPP and the MGPP based on the variable flow schedule as recommended by CDFW and as set forth in the Stipulation and Order, as described in Section 1.6 below. As agreed to by CDFW, these scheduled flows would comply with Section 5937 of the Fish and Game Code relative to maintaining appropriate conditions for fish populations in the proposed project segment of the Gorge. The proposed project would establish conditions consistent with the provisions of SWRCB License 10190 in relation to permitting the diversion of water from the Owens River for the purpose of power generation and transmission while maintaining fish habitat. Pursuant to Permit 5552, issued by the SWRCB's predecessor agency, no changes to the authorized diversion of water by the City of Los Angeles from the Owens River in Mono County are proposed.

Studies of riparian ecosystems, including numerous river system restoration projects, have demonstrated the importance of both maintaining minimum base flows to sustain riparian and aquatic habitats and providing periodic peak flows to help regenerate the habitats by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground on floodplains to establish and extend riparian vegetation communities.

The complex nature of river flow dynamics and the riverine-riparian habitat has been demonstrated in the Gorge over the past two decades. Beginning after the rupture of the penstock in 1991, flows were gradually reintroduced into the previously dry proposed project reaches of the Gorge, creating aquatic and riparian habitats that support fish populations. The release rate from the UGPP was approximately 16 cfs for an initial 5-year period, during which riparian vegetation established in the reaches of the Gorge below the UGPP. This constant and relatively low flow volume wetted extensive areas of the channel bottom, and, as a result, some of the new vegetation grew in saturated, poorly consolidated soils and became inundated as flows were gradually increased over the next several years. However, the increased flows during this latter period were not sufficient to dislodge and transport sediments. Therefore, in many locations, sediment deposits several feet thick accumulated in pools in the river channel, and the substrates of most riffles[1] became progressively more fine-grained.

Peak flows sufficient in volume to establish a seasonal disturbance regime that plays an important role in creating and maintaining the riverine-riparian habitat were released at the UGPP and the MGPP into the proposed project segment of the Gorge in June 2003 to evaluate the potential impact of these flows on LADWP's power generation facilities. Based on this test release, LADWP determined that some existing power generation and transmission structures and support facilities within the Gorge would require facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification prior to the implementation of the proposed project flows established in the Stipulation and Order to avoid substantial damage, excessive maintenance requirements, and/or severe operational limitations that would occur as a result of the peak flow conditions (see Section 1.6 below for a description of these required facility improvements). LADWP also determined that based on potential damage to an existing transmission tower that could not be prevented through reinforcement or other structural protection, the maximum feasible release into the Gorge in the reach between the UGPP and the MGPP is 400 cfs. Below the MGPP, a maximum release of 680 cfs is

[1] A riffle is a coarse bedded portion of a stream that is relatively shallow and over which water flows at a relatively high velocity.

feasible after the implementation of the facility improvements included in the proposed project. With the implementation of the facility improvements, LADWP has determined that the proposed project flows would not substantially limit LADWP's long-term power-generation and transmission capabilities in the Gorge.

CDFW determined that the flow levels established as a result of the 2003 test flows would effectively create the conditions necessary to establish and maintain a healthy riverine-riparian ecosystem in the Gorge by removing weakly rooted vegetation from aquatic habitats, leaving behind more strongly anchored riparian vegetation in suitable areas, restoring clean gravels (important for fish spawning, invertebrate diversity, and biological productivity), reestablishing deep pools, and dislodging and re-depositing fine sediments from the channel bed to adjacent floodplains (important for seed germination and the growth of new riparian vegetation).

Based on the test flow results, CDFW has determined that the proposed project flow regimes would markedly improve the quality of aquatic and riparian habitat and establish and maintain a fishery in good condition. The diversity of riparian habitats and the quality of pools, riffles, aquatic insect production, wildlife populations, and trout fishing are all expected to be improved by implementation of the proposed project. The existing riparian community as a whole would respond favorably to the proposed flow schedule and would be resilient to the proposed peak flows. Peak flows of up to 680 cfs may result in small, localized losses of riparian and wetland plants in scattered locations in the Gorge, while simultaneously promoting the wider establishment of new riparian and wetland plants in adjacent or nearby locations. The net effect would be beneficial to the Gorge ecosystem by promoting age and structural diversity in the riparian community. Such ecosystem restoration cannot be effectively replicated over the span of the proposed project reaches by physical or mechanical intervention.

Water to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition in the Gorge would be regulated according to a set of alternate base flow and seasonal peak flow releases from the UGPP and the MGPP, as recommended by CDFW and set forth in the Stipulation and Order. The frequency, magnitude, duration, and timing of releases under the proposed flow schedule is intended to provide for intra- and inter-annual variation important for river health, while providing LADWP with the flexibility to adjust the releases in response to water and power generation demands. The base stream flows would vary between 35 cfs and 85 cfs, depending on the year and month. Peak flows up to 400 cfs in the middle reach (between the UGPP and the MGPP) and up to 680 cfs in the lower reach (between the MGPP and the CGPP) would occur for limited periods during most years. Based on this schedule, the average annual amount of water released for instream flows would be approximately 40,000 acre-feet (AF) per year.

The proposed project's flow releases would be coordinated with, and continue to be governed by, water delivery needs such that year-to-year or seasonal water storage in Crowley Lake Reservoir would not be adversely affected, and LADWP would be able to meet its downstream water supply commitments. The procedure for allotting base flows and peak flows is intended to allow LADWP to coordinate instream releases with runoff conditions in order to help maintain normal water delivery operations. For the most part, inflow to Crowley Lake Reservoir exceeds the proposed base and peak flows on a monthly basis. However, in exceptionally dry years, inflow may be less than the projected peak flow releases to the Gorge for that season. To prevent the unintended drawdown of Crowley Lake Reservoir, no peak flows would be scheduled if by itself the peak flow would result in a

drawdown of Crowley Lake Reservoir during the fishing season such that fishing quality and opportunity would be adversely affected.

The reach of the Gorge upstream of the UGPP is not generally included in the proposed project actions. However, in accordance with the Stipulation and Order and consistent with this reach's designation as Owens tui chub critical habitat, it would be maintained in a manner similar to current conditions. Water would continue to feed this reach via seepage from the Long Valley Dam and springs, but no additional flows would be released by LADWP into this reach as long as pure Owens tui chub are present, except under limited circumstances related to dam safety and maintenance. As per the Stipulation and Order, such releases "are limited to circumstances when it is necessary to open the slide gate at the dam to perform dam maintenance, or as a consequence of dewatering wells used to prevent liquefaction of the dam during an earthquake." This management approach would continue to provide for the long-term protection of the Owens tui chub in the upper reach of the Gorge, while the release of flows below the UGPP in accordance with the proposed project flow schedule would establish and maintain a fishery in good condition in the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge.

1.6 Proposed Project Actions

As discussed above, the proposed project would consist primarily of prescribed releases of water into the Gorge from the UGPP and the MGPP that would be regulated according to a schedule of base flows and seasonal peak flows, which would include channel maintenance peak flows and riparian peak flows. The annual releases are based on a "runoff year," which begins April 1 and ends the following March 31. To accommodate the peak flows, the proposed project would also include the protection, reinforcement, and/or modification of some existing LADWP power generation and transmission structures or support elements within the Gorge. Additionally, the proposed project would include the installation of a pool and weir fishway to bring the existing fish barrier into compliance with Fish and Game Code Section 5901, which prohibits any device in Fish and Game District 4 1/2 that impedes the passing of fish up or downstream. Completion of the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and construction of the fishway are expected to be accomplished within 3 years from the date the Stipulation and Order is entered by the Court. After the construction activities are complete, the proposed flow schedule would commence.

Managed Average Base Flows

The schedule provided in Table 1 below identifies minimum average daily release rates from the UGPP that would be maintained downstream of the UGPP during each month of the year. Deviations in the rate of flow of up to 25 percent may occur as long as the average minimum flow for a given 24-hour period beginning at midnight conforms to the flow per the schedule for the given month. Variation in the annual base flow would be scheduled in relation to a 10-year cycle, which would commence with the first year of the proposed project releases. Base flows would be distributed between three different year types: below-normal, normal, and above-normal. The below-normal year flows would be implemented in 6 years of each 10-year cycle. Normal and above-normal year flows would be implemented in 3 years and 1 year, respectively, of each 10-year cycle. The average base flows within the Gorge would range between 35 and 85 cfs, depending upon month and year type. Changes in the base flow rate would occur on the first day of each month. In July, flows would also be changed on the sixteenth day of the month. Total annual base flow would be approximately

31,000 AF, 38,600 AF, and 46,600 AF for below-normal, normal, and above-normal years, respectively. LADWP would retain the option to select the year type to be applied in any particular year within the given constraints. However, no more than 3 consecutive years of below-normal flows shall generally occur unless agreed upon by CDFW.

TABLE 1 MANAGED AVERAGE BASE FLOWS (cfs)

Month	Below-Normal Year	Normal Year	Above-Normal Year
Frequency	*6 out of 10 years*	*3 out of 10 years*	*1 out of 10 years*
April	50	65	75
May	50	60	75
June	55	70	85
July 1-15	55	70	85
July 16-31	45	60	70
August	40	50	55
September	35	45	55
October	40	45	55
November	35	45	55
December	35	45	55
January	40	40	55
February	40	55	65
March	45	55	65

Peak Flows

In addition to the base flows, peak flows would be released to mimic natural seasonal runoff patterns. These flows are intended to clean fine sediments from pools and gravel bottoms, deposit fine sediments on floodplain surfaces, and create bare wet mineral habitats for the establishment of seedlings for native woody plants. Although the maximum capacity of the Gorge tunnel and penstock system is 680 cfs, peak flows in the middle reach of the Gorge (between the UGPP and the MGPP) would be limited to a maximum of only 400 cfs. As discussed above, the limiting factor for flows in this reach is the instability of a transmission tower foundation once flows reach 420 cfs. This condition was determined during the 2003 test releases, and it cannot be practically corrected through reinforcement of the foundation or other structural means such that flows could safely exceed 400 cfs.

The peak flows in the lower reach of the Gorge (between the MGPP and the CGPP) would achieve the maximum flow capacity of approximately 680 cfs. Per the Stipulation & Order, the highest Peak Flows may be approximately 20 cfs less than reflected in the flow Schedules when the capacity of the penstock is reduced due to a low surface elevation in Crowley Lake Reservoir. The higher flows in the Gorge downstream of the MGPP (i.e., those in excess of the 400 cfs flow in the Gorge upstream of the MGPP) would be made up with additional releases from the MGPP. Peak flows would be one of two types: channel maintenance peak flows and riparian peak flows. Variation in the type of peak flow that

would occur in a given year would be scheduled in relation to a 20-year cycle, which would commence with the first year of the proposed project releases.

Channel maintenance peak flows would occur in 13 years of each 20-year cycle. The primary purpose of channel maintenance peak flows, which would occur no more than once annually, is to clean fine sediments from pools and gravel bottoms and redistribute them to floodplain surfaces. A channel maintenance peak flow would be 7 consecutive days (168 hours) in duration. It would occur at a time of LADWP's choosing as long as it begins no earlier than February 1 and is completed no later than September 30. The flows during this event would be increased according to the schedule up to a maximum of 400 cfs in the reach between the UGPP and the MGPP and to 680 cfs in the reach between the MGPP and the CGPP and then be decreased to the base flow level. Flows up to 400 cfs would be released from the UGPP, as indicated in Table 2. Flows in excess of 400 cfs would be achieved by supplemental releases from the MGPP to reach the total release rate indicated in Table 3. The release rates indicated in the tables would remain constant across the time interval until the subsequent increase or decrease in flow is indicated.

TABLE 2 CHANNEL MAINTENANCE PEAK FLOWS BETWEEN THE UGPP AND THE MGPP

Time of Change (hour)	Release Rate (cfs)
--	Base Flow
0	130
1	180
2	230
3	280
4	330
5	380
6	400[1]
84	380
96	330
108	280
120	230
132	180
144	130
156	80
168	Base Flow

[1] Limited by potential damage to existing transmission tower foundation.

TABLE 3 CHANNEL MAINTENANCE PEAK FLOWS BETWEEN THE MGPP AND THE CGPP

Time of Change (hour)	Release Rate (cfs)
--	Base Flow
0	130
1	180
2	230
3	280
4	330
5	380
6	430[2]
7	480[2]
8	530[2]
9	580[2]
10	630[2]
11	680[2]
24	630[2]
36	580[2]
48	530[2]
60	480[2]
72	430[2]
84	380
96	330
108	280
120	230
132	180
144	130
156	80
168	Base Flow

[2] Release rates in excess of 400 cfs would be achieved by supplemental releases from the MGPP.

Riparian peak flows would occur in 5 years of each 20-year cycle. The primary purpose of riparian peak flows, which would occur no more than once annually, is to promote seedling establishment on floodplains and at higher elevations above the channel margins and to sustain root growth of these seedlings until they reach the water table associated with the base flows. A riparian peak flow would be 25 consecutive days (600 hours) in duration. It would occur at a time of LADWP's choosing except that the maximum flow (which would occur after hour 11 in the reach downstream of the MGPP) must commence no earlier than May 31 and no later than June 15. LADWP expects to time the riparian peak flows so that the highest flows occur during daylight hours in order to be better able to observe effects on its facilities. To meet these conditions, the riparian peak flows would begin no earlier than May 30 and be completed no later than July 9.

A riparian peak flow would not be released in the same year as a channel maintenance peak flow. Riparian peak flows would not occur in consecutive years and would not occur more than 5 years apart, except in unusual circumstances. The flows during this event

would be increased according to the schedule up to a maximum of 400 cfs in the reach between the UGPP and the MGPP and 680 cfs in the reach between the MGPP and the CGPP, and then be decreased to the base flow level. Similar to channel maintenance peak flows, flows up to 400 cfs would be released from the UGPP, as indicated in Table 4. Flows in excess of 400 cfs would be achieved by supplemental releases from the MGPP to reach the total release rate indicated in Table 5. The release rates indicated in the tables would remain constant across the time interval until the subsequent increase or decrease in flow is indicated.

TABLE 4 RIPARIAN PEAK FLOWS BETWEEN THE UGPP AND THE MGPP

Time of Change (hour)	Release Rate (cfs)
--	Base Flow
0	130
1	180
2	230
3	280
4	330
5	380
6	400[3]
48	395
72	380
96	370
120	360
144	350
168	330
192	315
216	295
240	275
264	260
288	240
312	225
336	210
360	190
384	175
408	160
432	145
456	130
480	115
504	100
528	90
552	85
576	75
600	Base Flow

[3] Limited by potential damage to existing transmission tower foundation.

TABLE 5 RIPARIAN PEAK FLOWS BETWEEN THE MGPP AND THE CGPP

Time of Change (hour)	Release Rate (cfs)
--	Base Flow
0	130
1	180
2	230
3	280
4	330
5	380
6	430[4]
7	480[4]
8	530[4]
9	580[4]
10	630[4]
11	680[4]
24	405[4]
48	395
72	380
96	370
120	360
144	350
168	330
192	315
216	295
240	275
264	260
288	240
312	225
336	210
360	190
384	175
408	160
432	145
456	130
480	115
504	100
528	90
552	85
576	75
600	Base Flow

[4] Release rates in excess of 400 cfs would be achieved by supplemental releases from the MGPP.

Channel maintenance and riparian peak flows would release approximately 5,300 and 12,350 AF of water, respectively. No channel maintenance or riparian peak flows would be released in 2 years of each 20-year cycle.

LADWP would limit public access to the Gorge during peak flow events, consistent with the need for public safety. LADWP would post warning and avoidance notices prior to and during peak flows to alert the public to the presence of high river flows that may make stream crossing, stream wading, fishing, rock climbing, or other recreation activities in the Gorge unsafe.

Reinforcement of Existing Structures and Facilities

As discussed above, based on the June 2003 test flows, it was determined that some existing structures related to the hydroelectric power generation and transmission function within the Gorge would require facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification prior to implementation of the proposed project flow regime to prevent damage that may occur under peak flow conditions and to continue to maintain access to LADWP's facilities during all flow conditions. The following issues were noted during the 2003 test flows.

Under peak flow conditions, LADWP could release 100 cfs into the river via the UGPP tailbay release structure and 300 cfs via the dam spillway located above the tailbay release structure. Flows from the spillway would pass through a narrow channel just east of the UGPP tailbay release structure before merging with flows from the tailbay release structure. During the June 2003 test flows, water overtopped the UGPP tailbay release structure, preventing personnel from accessing the valve vault.

A transmission tower located about 500 feet upstream of the MGPP on the east bank of the river experienced approximately 1/8-inch of movement during the June 2003 test flows before the flows were reduced in this segment to prevent a collapse.

Two 48-inch diameter steel bypass pipelines were installed across the MGPP tailbay in 1995 to allow river water to pass unobstructed around the MGPP. During the June 2003 test flows of 400 cfs, only approximately 200 cfs could pass through the bypass pipelines, and the entrance to the bypass pipelines became blocked. The flows overtopped the headwall and entered the MGPP tailbay. The water contained in the tailbay is used for cooling and power generation. Therefore, it must be kept clean of excessive sediment and debris to avoid damage to the power generation equipment.

Groundwater seepage occurred along the roadway leading to the UGPP and the roadways upstream and downstream of the MGPP during the test flows, a condition that would restrict access by LADWP vehicles and equipment for operations and maintenance of the plants. Additionally, the test flows destabilized the river banks adjacent to the roadway upstream of the MGPP where previously installed bank reinforcement had deteriorated.

To resolve these potential issues, LADWP would remove an existing siphon pipe from the east bank at the UGPP to prevent peak flows from overtopping the structure. At the MGPP, the existing bypass pipelines would be replaced or substantially modified to allow 400 cfs to bypass the tailbay. Several segments of access road between the UGPP and the CGPP would be modified to prevent flooding and washouts. The proposed work includes installing drainage devices, reestablishing gutters and flow-lines to culverts or discharge points,

repairing existing culverts, and re-grading the unpaved portions of the roadway to direct drainage back to the river. Some portions of paved roadway may need to be thickened with additional asphalt to strengthen the pavement, and weak areas of pavement would be replaced. In addition, limited sections of the riverbank would be reinforced using rip-rap, gabion baskets, and/or shotcrete, and obstructions within the river channel may also be removed. Protection of the transmission tower located upstream of the MGPP would also be required, including reinforcement of the bank along both sides of the river with gabion baskets and realignment of the roadway to the west.

Fishway

The existing fish barrier located approximately 600 feet upstream of the CGPP currently prevents the upstream migration of adult brown trout to segments of the Gorge located above the CGPP. To restore fish access to the lower reach of the Gorge during base flow conditions, a pool and weir fishway would be installed at the existing concrete fish barrier located upstream of the CGPP. The fishway would be constructed of reinforced concrete and situated on the right bank of the river at the toe of the existing fish barrier. It would consist of a series of stepped pools separated by weir plates containing notches and orifices that would allow adult brown trout to pass, per a design approved by CDFW. Retention of the fish barrier would maintain the existing stream bed gradient and prevent potential down-cutting of the stream bottom and loss of wetland that would be triggered by removal of the structure. The fishway would be constructed at the same time as the protection, reinforcement, and/or modification of existing structures is undertaken by LADWP, such that the fishway would be operational when implementation of the proposed flow schedule would commence.

1.7 Construction Schedule and Procedures

To maintain generation reliability, LADWP is currently implementing improvements to the three Gorge power plants, including repairing and/or updating the turbine and generator assemblies, bypass systems, and shutoff valves. These power plant improvements require that relatively large flows be intermittently diverted through the Gorge rather than through the tunnel and penstock system. Because of these intermittent flows in the river, the facility protection and reinforcement work necessary to implement the proposed project flow schedule (some of which must occur within the river channel) cannot proceed until the completion of the power plant improvements, which is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2015.

After completion of the power plant improvements and pending the entering of the Stipulation and Order by the Court, LADWP would commence construction of the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities necessary to implement the proposed project flow schedule. Since much of this work would occur within the river channel, it must be completed prior to the actual implementation of the proposed flow schedule. This construction activity is anticipated to take approximately two years to complete with an expected end date of late 2017. Upon completion of facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities, the proposed flow schedule would be implemented.

Construction activity for facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification would involve a minimal amount of personnel, equipment, and vehicle trips. Limited construction activity

would take place within the river channel itself. Additionally, LADWP may temporarily limit public access in areas surrounding construction sites, consistent with the need for public safety. Under the terms of a Streambed Alteration Agreement with CDFW, flows within the proposed project segments may be temporarily reduced to facilitate construction, safety, and environmental protection.

An appropriate combination of monitoring and resource impact avoidance would be employed during the construction activities, including implementation of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs):

- The proposed project would implement Rule 401 fugitive dust control measures required by the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD), which requires reasonable precautions be taken to prevent visible particulate matter from being airborne, under normal wind conditions, beyond the property from which the emission originates. Reasonable precautions include, but are not limited to, the following:
    1. Use, where possible, of water or chemicals for control of dust in the demolition of existing buildings or structures, construction operations, the grading of roads, or the clearing of land;
    2. Application of asphalt, water, or suitable chemicals on dirt roads, material stockpiles, and other surfaces which can give rise to airborne dusts;
    3. Installation and use of hoods, fans, and fabric filters, to enclose and vent the handling of dusty materials. Adequate contaminant methods shall be employed during such handling operations;
    4. Use of water, chemicals, chuting, venting, or other precautions to prevent particulate matter from becoming airborne in handling dusty materials to open stockpiles and mobile equipment; and
    5. Maintenance of roadways in a clean condition.
- The proposed project would implement Rule 402 measures required by the GBUAPCD, which requires that any quantities of air contaminants or other materials would not be discharged that cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public or which cause or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.
- The proposed project would develop and implement an erosion control plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for construction activities. Erosion control and grading plans may include, but would not be limited to, the following:
    1. Minimizing the extent of disturbed areas and duration of exposure
    2. Stabilizing and protecting disturbed areas
    3. Keeping runoff velocities low
    4. Retaining sediment within the construction area
- Construction erosion control BMPs may include the following:
    1. Temporary desilting basins
    2. Silt fences

3. Gravel bag barriers
4. Temporary soil stabilization with mattresses and mulching
5. Temporary drainage inlet protection
6. Diversion dikes and interceptor swales
7. Non-structural BMPs

- The proposed project would comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (also known as the General Construction Stormwater Permit or GCSWP), which requires operators of small construction sites to control polluted storm water runoff.
- The project would also comply with conditions specified in Clean Water Act Section 401 State Water Quality certification.
- LADWP would ensure all construction crews have fire-suppression equipment (such as fire extinguishers) on site to respond to the accidental ignition of a fire.
- LADWP would minimize short-term construction noise experienced by recreational users within the Gorge through: (1) proper maintenance and tuning of all construction equipment engines to minimize noise emissions; and (2) proper maintenance and functioning of the mufflers on all internal combustion and equipment engines.
- LADWP would implement the guidelines and measures of the Work Area Protection and Traffic Control Manual developed by the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Committee, as applicable, to minimize off-site transportation and traffic effects.

1.8 Required Permits and Approvals

A number of approvals and/or permits would be required to implement the proposed project. This Negative Declaration would be used to facilitate compliance with federal and State laws and the granting of permits by various State and local agencies having jurisdiction over one or more aspects of the project. These approvals and permits may include, but may not be limited, to the following:

City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

- Adoption of the Negative Declaration by the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners
- Approval of the proposed project by the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners
- Approval and execution of the Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction; Order of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction to resolve Civil Action No. 10088 by the City of Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners

Mono County

- Approval and execution of the Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction; Order of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction to resolve Civil Action No. 10088

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Streambed Alteration Agreement
- Approval and execution of the Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction; Order of Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction to resolve Civil Action No. 10088

State of California Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System GCSWP
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements (Water Quality Order 2003-0017-DWQ) for Dredged or Fill Discharges That Have Received State Water Quality Certification

United States Army Corps of Engineers

- Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit

SECTION 2
INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

The following discussion of potential environmental effects was completed in accordance with Section 15063(d)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines to determine if the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment.

CEQA INITIAL STUDY FORM

Project Title:
Owens Gorge Flow Restoration Project

Lead Agency Name and Address:
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Environmental Planning and Assessment
111 North Hope Street, Room 1044
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Contact Person and Phone Number:
Julie Van Wagner
Environmental Affairs
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
(213) 367-5295

Project Sponsor's Name and Address:
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
111 North Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Project Location:
The Owens River Gorge is located between Crowley Lake Reservoir in southwest Mono County and Pleasant Valley Reservoir in northwest Inyo County, California.

General Plan Designation:
The project site is designated Open Space and Resource Management in Mono County, and Natural Resources and State and Federal Lands in Inyo County.

Zoning:
The project site is zoned OS (Open Space) and RM (Resource Management) in Mono County, and NR (Natural Resources) and SFL (State and Federal Lands) in Inyo County.

Description of Project:
The proposed project would consist primarily of prescribed releases of water into the Gorge from the UGPP and the MGPP that would be regulated according to a schedule of flows set forth in the Stipulation and Order prepared by the Mono County District Attorney, Mono County Counsel, LADWP, and CDFW. The flow schedule would include base flows and seasonal peak flows, including channel maintenance peak flows and riparian peak flows (see Section 1.6 above). The annual releases are based on a “runoff year,” which would begin April 1 and end the following March 31. To accommodate the

peak flows, the proposed project would also include the protection, reinforcement, and/or modification of some existing LADWP power generation and transmission structures within the Gorge. Additionally, the proposed project would include the installation of a fishway at the existing fish barrier located upstream of the CGPP.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:
The Gorge is located between Crowley Lake Reservoir in southwest Mono County and Pleasant Valley Reservoir in northwest Inyo County, California. The City of Bishop is located approximately 8.5 miles southeast of Pleasant Valley Reservoir. The proposed project segment of the Gorge is located entirely on land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles. There are three 37.5-megawatt hydroelectric power plants in the Gorge that are owned and operated by LADWP. Other facilities within the Gorge include roads, transmission towers, housing near the CGPP for use by LADWP operations personnel, two public restrooms between the UGPP and the MGPP, and a concrete fish barrier located upstream of the CGPP.

The Gorge is used by LADWP to generate electricity and transport water for use in the LADWP service area. It is also open to the public for recreational use, including fishing, rock climbing, birding, and hiking. However, no access for public vehicles is provided. The project property is located adjacent to Inyo National Forest and Bureau of Land Management land. There is no development within or immediately adjacent to the Gorge other than the aforementioned facilities.

Responsible/Trustee Agencies:

- State of California, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- State of California, Water Resources Control Board
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the Environmental Impacts discussion in Section 3.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology/Soils
☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Land Use Planning
☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise	☐ Population/Housing
☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation/Traffic
☐ Utilities/Service Systems	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance	

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☒ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an environmental impact report is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project may have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Julie Va Wayne — 9/18/14

Signature — Date

Charles C. Holloway
Manager of Environmental Planning and Assessment
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I.	**AESTHETICS**. Would the project:				
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				**X**
b.	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				**X**
c.	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				**X**
d.	Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				**X**
II.	**AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**. In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
a.	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				**X**
b.	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson act contract?				**X**
c.	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				**X**
d.	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				**X**
e.	Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				**X**

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III.	**AIR QUALITY**. Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a.	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			**X**	
b.	Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?			**X**	
c.	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			**X**	
d.	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				**X**
e.	Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			**X**	
IV.	**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**. Would the project:				
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			**X**	
b.	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			**X**	
c.	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			**X**	
d.	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			**X**	
e.	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				**X**
f.	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				**X**

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V.	**CULTURAL RESOURCES**. Would the project:				
a.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?				**X**
b.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?			**X**	
c.	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			**X**	
d.	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			**X**	
VI.	**GEOLOGY AND SOILS**. Would the project:				
a.	Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
	i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				**X**
	ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				**X**
	iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				**X**
	iv) Landslides?			**X**	
b.	Result in substantial soil erosion, loss of topsoil, or changes in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading, or fill?			**X**	
c.	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			**X**	
d.	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				**X**
e.	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				**X**
VII.	**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**: Would the project:				
a.	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impacts on the environment?			**X**	
b.	Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				**X**

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII.	**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**: Would the project:				
a.	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			**X**	
b.	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			**X**	
c.	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				**X**
d.	Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				**X**
e.	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				**X**
f.	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				**X**
g.	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				**X**
h.	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?			**X**	
IX.	**HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**. Would the project:				
a.	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			**X**	
b.	Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				**X**
c.	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?			**X**	

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d.	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?			X	
e.	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?			X	
f.	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	
g.	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h.	Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
i.	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?			X	
j.	Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X
X.	**LAND USE AND PLANNING**. Would the project:				
a.	Physically divide an established community?				X
b.	Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c.	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X
XI.	**MINERAL RESOURCES**. Would the project:				
a.	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
b.	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				X
XII.	**NOISE**. Would the project result in:				
a.	Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b.	Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c.	A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d.	A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			**X**	
e.	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				**X**
f.	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				**X**
XIII.	**POPULATION AND HOUSING**. Would the project:				
a.	Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				**X**
b.	Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				**X**
c.	Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				**X**
XIV.	**PUBLIC SERVICES**.				
a.	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
	i) Fire protection?				**X**
	ii) Police protection?				**X**
	iii) Schools?				**X**
	iv) Parks?				**X**
	v) Other public facilities?				**X**
XV.	**RECREATION**.				
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?			**X**	
b.	Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				**X**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?			X	
b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?			X	
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?				X
XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:				
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?			X	
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c. Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?			X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact After Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				**X**
XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.				
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			**X**	
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.			**X**	
c. Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			**X**	

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SECTION 3
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The following discussion addresses impacts to various environmental resources per the Initial Study checklist questions contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and included above in Section 2 of the Initial Study.

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact. The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. Scenic vistas are generally defined as panoramic public views to various natural features, including large water bodies or striking or unusual terrain, or unique urban or historic features. Public access to these views may be from park lands, private and publicly owned sites, and public rights-of-way.

The Gorge is located on land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and used by LADWP for hydroelectric power generation and water supply. At the nearest point, the Gorge is located approximately 0.75 miles east of United States Highway 395 (US 395). However, the bottom of the Gorge is located several hundred feet below the elevation of the US 395 and is, therefore, not visible from the highway.

Nonetheless, the Gorge is located adjacent to the Inyo National Forest and public lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Additionally, although located on City of Los Angeles property, the Gorge can be accessed by the public. Typical recreational uses within the Gorge include fishing, rock climbing, birding, and hiking. Due to the steep cliffs and sheer walls, most visitors access the Gorge by walking or biking along the LADWP service roads, which are restricted to LADWP and emergency service vehicles.

Prior to 1991, when the CGPP penstock ruptured, some water was present in the upper reach between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP due to seepage from the dam and springs. The middle and lower reaches were essentially dry washes. Following the rupture of the penstock, LADWP gradually increased flows downstream of the UGPP, and riparian vegetation has established along the river in the middle and lower reaches (between the UGPP and the CGPP). Water now flows through the entire Gorge at all times.

During most of the year, views at the bottom of the Gorge consist of a relatively low flowing river with vegetated banks. These views are framed by the steep cliff walls or talus extending several hundred feet above the water. Depending on the location of the viewer, LADWP power generation facilities may also be present within the view. These include the hydroelectric power plants, the penstocks, transmission lines, service roads and parking areas, and earlier powerhouse facilities that are now abandoned. Views from the cliffs above the Gorge include

open space in the adjacent Inyo National Forest and Bureau of Land Management property, rock outcroppings, roadways, and the Gorge opening. Although located several hundred feet below the elevation of the cliffs, it is possible to see the riparian vegetation and, in some areas, the water surface from the edge of the Gorge above.

The proposed project involves implementation of an increased flow regime within the project reaches of the Gorge. Expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels are expected to result, which would not adversely affect the scenic vista. Instead, the long-term effect would be beneficial. Therefore, no impact to a scenic vista would occur.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not damage scenic resources within a State scenic highway. US 395 in the project vicinity is an officially designated State scenic highway.[2] However, as discussed in Section I(a) above, the bottom of the Gorge is not visible from US 395. Therefore, the proposed project would not alter scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a State scenic highway. No impact would occur.

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

No Impact. The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. As discussed in Section I(a) above, implementation of the proposed project would positively enhance the visual character by expanding riparian habitat and raising water levels within the Gorge. No adverse impact to visual character would occur.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views. No permanent night lighting or reflective surfaces would be installed as part of the proposed project. Additionally, facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and construction of the fishway would occur during daytime hours. No nighttime lighting would be required during construction. Therefore, no short- or long-term impact from light or glare would occur.

[2] State of California Department of Transportation. *State Scenic Highway Program*. Website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm, accessed January 2014.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The project site and surrounding area are not mapped as containing Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.[3] Therefore, the proposed project would not convert Farmland to non-agricultural use. No impact would occur.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The project site is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and used by LADWP for power generation and water supply. Therefore, no Williamson Act contracts are applicable to the project site. No portion of the project site is zoned for agricultural use; therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use. No impact would occur.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. The project site is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and used by LADWP for power generation and water supply. No portion of the project site is zoned for or developed as forest land or timberland as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) or Government Code Section 4526.[4,5] Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for or cause a rezoning of forest or timberland. No impact would occur.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. As stated above, no portion of the project area is zoned or developed for forest land use. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

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[3] State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program, *Important Farmland in California, 1010* map. Website: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/statewide/2010/fmmp2010_wallsize.pdf, accessed January 2014.

[4] Mono County. General Plan Land Use Designation Maps. Website: http://www.monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/812/planning_areas_2009.pdf, accessed January 2014.

[5] Inyo County Planning Department, Inyo County General Plan, Land Use and Conservation/Open Space Elements, Diagram 1. Website: http://www.inyoplanning.org/general_plan/graphics/landuse/Diag01.pdf, accessed January 2014.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. As stated above, no portion of the project site or surrounding area is identified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Additionally, no forest land exists within or adjacent to the project site. The proposed project would not affect the allocation of water resources such that agricultural or forest areas downstream of the Gorge would be affected. Therefore, the proposed project would not change the existing environment in a way that would result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

III. AIR QUALITY

Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Short-term and relatively minor air pollutant emissions would be generated during the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities required to withstand increased flows in the Gorge and during the construction of the fishway. This work would not conflict with the implementation of the applicable air quality management plan. Long-term operation of the proposed project would not require an increase in LADWP personnel or vehicle trips and would not, therefore, lead to an increase of air pollutant emissions. Expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels in the Gorge may attract more recreational users than currently visit the area. However, due to the difficulty accessing the bottom of the Gorge, the increase in visitors would not be substantial such that it would generate air pollutant emissions that would violate the applicable air quality management plan. The impact would be less than significant.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less Than Significant Impact. Short-term and relatively minor air pollutant emissions would be generated from the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway. This would include generation of emissions associated with equipment exhaust; fugitive dust from materials handling; worker vehicles commuting to and from the job site; and trucks delivering material and equipment to the work areas. Portable stationary equipment (e.g., power generators) would be subject to permitting by the GBUAPCD or registration with the California Air Resources Board, and all construction activities would be subject to the GBUAPCD rules governing fugitive dust control (Rule 401) and nuisance (Rule 402). Because of the limited nature of construction activities in terms of types of equipment and number of hours of use, the number of construction worker vehicle trips, and the number of delivery/haul truck trips, and due to compliance with the GBUAPCD rules, short-term construction emissions would not violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation. The impact would be less than significant.

Long-term operation of the proposed project would not require an increase in LADWP personnel or vehicle trips and would not, therefore, lead to an increase of air pollutant emissions. The expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels could attract additional recreational users to the Gorge. However, the increase in visitors to the project area is not expected to be substantial due to the difficulty accessing the Gorge. Therefore, any increase in regional air pollutant emissions during project operations would not violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation. The impact would be less than significant

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section III(b) above, the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would result in short-term increases in air pollutant emissions. However, due the limited nature of these activities in terms of types of equipment and number of hours of use, the number of construction worker vehicle trips, and the number of delivery/haul truck trips, and including compliance with the GBUAPCD rules, short-term construction emissions would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in a criteria pollutant.

As discussed in Section III(b) above, the proposed project would require no additional post-construction operational activities by LADWP. There would be no increase in LADWP personnel or vehicle trips during operations and, therefore, no increased air pollutant emissions. Although there may be an increase in recreational users to the Gorge as a result of expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels, the increase is not expected to generate a substantial number of net new vehicle trips and resultant air pollutant emissions. Therefore, there would be no cumulatively considerable net increase in regional air pollutant emissions during operations. The impact would be less than significant.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

No Impact. Some land uses are considered more sensitive to changes in air quality than others, depending on the population groups and the activities involved. Sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, child care centers, athletic facilities, long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes, none of which are located in the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, no sensitive receptors would be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. No impact would occur.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less Than Significant Impact. Exhaust from equipment would emit odors during construction activities. However, these odors would be localized and generally confined to the immediate area surrounding the construction site. The odors would also be temporary in nature. Additionally, all construction activities would comply with GBUAPCD rules governing nuisance (Rule 402). Therefore, the odor impact during construction would be less than significant.

The proposed project would require no post-construction operational activities that would be expected to generate increased odors. Therefore, no odor impact would occur during operations.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact. Sensitive plants include those listed as threatened or endangered, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW, or those listed by the California Native Plant Society. Sensitive wildlife species are those listed as threatened or endangered, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW, or considered special status by CDFW. Sensitive habitats are those that are regulated by the USFWS or the United States Army Corps of Engineers and/or those considered sensitive by CDFW.

Sensitive Plant Species

No sensitive plant species are known to occur within the Gorge. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would require work within the river channel and along the banks. These short-term activities may result in the loss of vegetation through direct removal, crushing and trampling, or deprivation of water. However, no direct or indirect impact to sensitive plant species would occur during construction.

During long-term implementation of peak flows, some vegetation losses are expected as weaker vegetation is removed as part of the natural cycle associated with the riverine-riparian habitat. However, riparian habitat along the proposed project reaches is expected be enhanced from increased flows in the Gorge based on the redistribution of sediment, the deposition of seeds, and the support of seedlings. As discussed above, no sensitive plant species would be directly or indirectly impacted by these actions as none exist within the Gorge. Therefore, no long-term impact would occur.

Sensitive Aquatic Wildlife Species

The upper reach of the Gorge, between Long Valley Dam and the UGPP, provides an environment suitable to sustain the Owens tui chub, a fish species listed as endangered by the State and federal governments. The Gorge in this reach has been designated by the USFWS as critical habitat for the Owens tui chub. No modifications to the upper reach or Owens tui chub critical habitat are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, no impact to the Owens tui chub would occur during either construction or operation of the proposed project.

Brown trout and Owens sucker are the primary fish species present in the proposed project segment of the river between the UGPP and the CGPP. The Owens sucker is considered a species of special concern by CDFW. The brown trout is not a sensitive species. Construction work within the river channel and along the banks may result in the loss of individual brown trout and Owens sucker within the project reaches. Losses may be caused by temporary dewatering of portions of the Gorge, stranding fish, or crushing due to construction equipment and workers within the river. These effects would be short-term and not of sufficient magnitude to have significant or detectable population-level effects. Therefore, the short-term impact to sensitive aquatic wildlife species would be less than significant.

Periodic peak flows during project operations would help regenerate the riverine-riparian habitat by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground on floodplains to establish and extend riparian vegetation communities. The proposed project flow regime is intended to markedly improve the quality of aquatic habitat. Transient reductions in water transparency and changes in velocity during peak flows could temporarily interfere with feeding behavior. Individual Owens sucker could become stranded outside of the river channel. Additionally, the movement of vegetation, sediment and rocks during peak flows could crush or injure individuals. However, these short-term impacts to individuals are not expected to have significant or detectable population-level effects. Instead, peak flows are expected to increase the populations of Owens sucker and brown trout. The diversity of riparian habitats and the quality of pools, riffles, aquatic insect production, and aquatic populations are all expected to be improved by implementation of the proposed project flows. The short-term losses of individual Owens sucker would be offset by the long-term increase of the population within the Gorge. Therefore, the impact to sensitive aquatic wildlife species would be less than significant.

Sensitive Terrestrial Wildlife Species

Avian surveys conducted by LADWP and observations by CDFW indicate that the special-status yellow breasted chat (*Icteria virens*) and yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*) may breed in the riparian habitat located at the bottom of the Gorge. Peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinis*), a State-endangered species, have been observed in the project area. Potential breeding habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), a State and federally listed species, may exist in the proposed project reach; known breeding populations of this species exist within four miles of the project area in Pleasant Valley, although none have been recorded or observed within the Gorge. Potential breeding habitat for the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), also a State and federally listed species, may also exist in the proposed project reach; however, this species has not been known to breed in the Owens Valley in several decades. Acoustical bat surveys conducted in the Gorge by LADWP in recent years indicate that the Gorge is used by several species, none of which are sensitive species. No other sensitive non-aquatic wildlife species are known to use the Gorge or are expected to occur.

The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would require work within the river channel and along the banks. These short-term activities may result in the removal of vegetation, which has the potential to disturb nesting and breeding birds and bats, depending on the season in which this activity occurs. To avoid potential impacts, LADWP shall not undertake vegetation removal during the nesting/breeding season (generally February 15 to September 15), except as follows: if vegetation removal would occur during the nesting/breeding season, protocol level surveys, in accordance with the USFWS guidelines, shall be conducted to locate any active nests within the construction area; project activities shall not occur within a buffer distance from active nests or roost sites, as determined by a qualified biological monitor in consideration of species sensitivity and existing nest or roost site conditions; and limits of avoidance shall be demarcated with flagging or fencing. Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the issuance of a Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW would ensure that there would be no direct significant impacts to nesting/breeding bird and bat species during project construction.

During long-term implementation of the proposed project peak flows, minor vegetation losses are expected as weaker vegetation is removed as part of the natural cycle associated with the riverine-riparian habitat. However, riparian habitat along the proposed project reaches is expected be enhanced from increased flows in the Gorge based on the redistribution of sediment, the deposition of seeds, and the support of seedlings. Sensitive bird species, as well as migratory and resident bird and bat species could be impacted by peak flows through small, localized losses of nesting and roosting sites. These effects would be short-term and not of sufficient magnitude to have significant or detectable population-level effects. Further, periodic peak flows are necessary to help regenerate the riparian habitat by dispersing seeds to higher ground on floodplains to establish and extend riparian vegetation in which sensitive migratory and resident bird species nest and bat species roost. The diversity of riparian habitats, aquatic insect production, and terrestrial wildlife populations are expected to be improved by implementation of the proposed project. Limited short-term losses would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the ecosystem produced by the proposed project. Therefore, the impact to sensitive terrestrial wildlife species would be less than significant.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 1.3 above, following the rupture of the penstock, LADWP worked with CDFW to establish a permanent base flow in the Gorge below the UGPP. Based on this flow, as well as several years of test studies in the mid-1990s and early 2000s that also introduced seasonal peak flows into the middle and lower reaches of the Gorge, riparian vegetation has established along the channel between the UGPP and the CGPP. The project reaches of the Gorge currently contain riparian species such as red willow, sandbar willow, and Fremont cottonwood.

During the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, the proposed project would require the disturbance of limited riparian habitat. During long-term implementation of the proposed project flows, minor localized losses of riparian vegetation would be expected to occur. However, these localized losses of riparian habitat would be offset through the long-term establishment and maintenance of a larger and more diverse riverine-riparian ecosystem within the Gorge. As discussed in Section 1.5 above, periodic peak flows are necessary to help regenerate the riverine-riparian habitat by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground on floodplains to establish and extend riparian vegetation communities. It has been determined by CDFW that the proposed project flow regime would markedly improve the quality of aquatic and riparian habitat in the Gorge below the UGPP. The diversity of riparian habitats and the quality of pools, riffles, aquatic insect production, and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife populations are anticipated to be improved by implementation of the proposed project. The existing riparian community as a whole would respond favorably to the proposed flow schedule by developing resilience to peak flows, which would promote the establishment of new riparian and wetland plants in a wider corridor. The release of project flows would be beneficial to the Gorge ecosystem by promoting age and structural diversity in the riparian community. Accordingly, the limited short-term losses would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the Gorge ecosystem produced by the proposed project. The net effect of the proposed project would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riparian habitat. Therefore, the impact to riparian habitat would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section IV(a) above, the upper reach above the UGPP provides a riparian-riverine habitat suitable to sustain the Owens tui chub. No modifications to the upper reach or Owens tui chub critical habitat are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, no impact to riparian-riverine habitat above the UGPP would occur during either short-term construction or long-term operations.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IV(a) above, the proposed project would result in minor short-term losses of riparian habitat, including or potentially including wetlands, during the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, as well as during peak flow events. However, these limited short-term losses would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the Gorge ecosystem produced by the proposed project. The net effect of the proposed project would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of wetland and riparian habitats. Therefore, the impact to wetlands would be less than significant.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery/breeding sites?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IV(a) above, the proposed project may interfere with the movement of native resident and migratory aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species during the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, as well as during peak flow events. Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the issuance of a Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW would ensure that there would be no direct significant impacts to resident and migratory bird and bat species during project construction. Any limited short-term interference with migration or breeding activities to resident and migratory fish species during peak flows would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the Gorge ecosystem produced by the proposed project. The net effect of the proposed project would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riverine-riparian habitat in the Gorge. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant. Further, the proposed fishway would have the long-term beneficial effect of allowing for the passage of migratory fish species upstream of the CGPP.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance (e.g., oak trees or California walnut woodlands)?

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. No impact would occur.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. No regional habitat conservation plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans have been adopted that apply to the project site.[6,7] As discussed in Section IV(a) above, the upper reach of the Gorge provides critical habitat for the Owens tui chub, a fish species listed as endangered by the State and federal governments. However, no modifications to the upper reach are proposed as part of the project; therefore, no impact to the Owens tui chub critical habitat would occur during either construction or operation as a result of the proposed project.

[6] Mono County, op. cit.
[7] Inyo County Planning Department, op. cit.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5?

No Impact. No prehistoric or historic cultural resources have been previously recorded within the Gorge.[8] There are two abandoned powerhouses in the Gorge, known as the Adams Main Powerhouse and the Adams Auxiliary Powerhouse. These are concrete structures built in the 1920s by the Southern Sierra Power Company. They were purchased by the City of Los Angeles in 1933 and were in use until the 1950s. The two powerhouses retain only the integrity of location, having lost major structural and physical elements. In addition, they are not associated with significant historical events or persons important in history. They do not possess distinctive architectural or engineering characteristics.[9] Accordingly, although no physical changes to these structures are proposed, they are not eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. No impact would occur.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section V(a) above, no prehistoric or historic resources have been recorded within the Gorge. Further, no prehistoric or historic cultural resources have been previously encountered during ground disturbing activities, including construction and maintenance activities performed by LADWP within the Gorge. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a known archaeological resource. Although not expected to occur, in the event previously uncovered archaeological resources are encountered during project construction, the construction manager would halt construction activities in the immediate area in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(f). LADWP would then retain a qualified archaeological monitor to make an immediate evaluation of the significance and appropriate treatment of the resource. Construction activities may continue on other parts of the construction site while evaluation and treatment of archaeological resources take place, if necessary. Compliance with these existing policies would ensure no significant impact would occur.

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant Impact. The sediments in the Gorge are of the Holocene age (deposited during the last 10,000 years) and are not likely to contain fossil localities. Further, no paleontological resources have been previously encountered during ground disturbing activities, including construction and maintenance activities by LADWP within the Gorge. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique

[8] JRP Historical Consulting. 2004. *Historical resources inventory and evaluation report: Adams Auxiliary and Adams Main Powerhouses, Mono County, California*. Prepared for LADWP.

[9] Ibid.

geological feature. Although not expected to occur, in the event previously uncovered paleontological resources are encountered during project construction, the construction manager would halt construction activities in the immediate area in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(f). LADWP would then retain a qualified paleontological monitor to make an immediate evaluation of the significance and appropriate treatment of the resource. Construction activities may continue on other parts of the construction site while evaluation and treatment of paleontological resources take place, if necessary. Compliance with these existing policies would ensure no significant impact would occur.

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less Than Significant Impact. There are no known cemeteries located within the Gorge, and human remains have not been encountered during previous construction and maintenance activities within the Gorge. Therefore, human remains are not expected to be encountered during project construction. Although not expected to occur, in the event that any human remains or related resources are discovered, they would be treated in accordance with State and local regulations and guidelines (including CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[e]) for disclosure, recovery, relocation, and preservation, as appropriate. Human remains would require evaluation by the county coroner as to the nature of the remains. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission would be contacted and a Most Likely Descendent identified. Compliance with these existing policies would ensure no significant impact would occur.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

No Impact. The proposed project would not expose people or structures to new adverse effects associated with rupture of a known earthquake fault. Although there are numerous known earthquake faults in the vicinity of project site, no new habitable structures are proposed to be constructed or operated. Therefore, no impact would occur.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

No Impact. The project site is located within the seismically active region, and like all locations within the area, is subject to strong seismic ground shaking. However, as discussed in Section VI(a)(i) above, no new habitable structures are proposed to be constructed or operated. Therefore, no impact would occur.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No Impact. The project site is located within the Gorge, which is part of the Owens River and is not subject to liquefaction. Therefore, no impact would occur.

iv) Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. The walls within the Gorge include talus slopes that are potentially subject to landslides due to seismic activity and wind and water erosion. The proposed project is intended to increase scour within the river channel and may result in loosening of vegetative material and rocks within and adjacent to the river. Although no new habitable structures are proposed to be constructed or operated, landslides could pose a danger to the recreational users within the Gorge. As discussed in Section 1.6 above, LADWP would limit public access to the Gorge, consistent with the need for public safety, during peak flow events, which is when increased scour and erosion could trigger landslides or rockfalls. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would involve minimal ground disturbance but could expose soils for a limited time, allowing for possible erosion. During construction, transport of sediments from the project site by storm water runoff and winds would be prevented through the use of appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs). As discussed in Section 1.7 above, Rule 401 dust control measures would be implemented as required by the GBUAPCD. Additionally, LADWP would develop and implement an erosion control plan and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for construction activities, in compliance with the latest National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements for storm water discharges. Implementation of the required construction BMPs would ensure that soil erosion impacts during construction would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed flow regime is intended to increase scour and erosion within the river channel. As described in Section 1.5 above, these materials would be redeposited within the river channel and on the floodplain to improve the quality of aquatic and riparian habitat in the Gorge. The net impact of this natural erosion and deposition process would be beneficial to the health of the riverine-riparian habitat within the Gorge. Therefore, the long-term impact would be less than significant.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section VI(a)(iv) above, the cliff walls of the Gorge are currently and would continue to be subject to landslides. Potential erosion as a result of the proposed project could destabilize talus slopes adjacent to the river, resulting in a landslide or rockfall. Therefore, LADWP would limit public access to the Gorge, consistent with the need for public safety, during

peak flow events, which is when increased scour and erosion could trigger landslides or rockfalls. The impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section VI(a)(iii) above, the project site is not subject to liquefaction. Therefore, lateral spreading, which is liquefaction induced, would not occur.

Subsidence is the lowering of surface elevation due to changes occurring underground, such as extraction of large amounts of groundwater, oil, or gas. For example, when groundwater is extracted from aquifers at a rate that exceeds the rate of replenishment, subsidence can occur. However, the proposed project does not involve extraction of any groundwater, oil, or gas from the project site. Therefore, subsidence would not occur.

Collapsible soils consist of loose dry materials that collapse and compact under the addition of water or excessive loading. Collapsible soils are prevalent throughout the southwestern United States, specifically in areas of young alluvium. Soil collapse occurs when the land surface is saturated at depths greater than those reached by typical rain events. The project site does not contain young alluvium and would not be subject to collapse.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

No Impact. Expansive soils are clay-based soils that tend to expand (increase in volume) as they absorb water and shrink (lessen in volume) as water is drawn away. If soils consist of expansive clay, foundation movement and/or damage can result if wetting and drying of the clay does not occur uniformly across the entire area. However, the project site does not contain expansive clay.[10] Therefore, no impact would occur.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, no impact associated with the use of such systems would occur.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) refer to atmospheric gases that affect global climate conditions. GHGs, such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O), absorb thermal radiation from the Earth's

[10] State of California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps, *Casa Diablo and Rovana Quadrangle Maps*, Effective January 1, 1985. Website: http://www.quake.ca.gov/gmaps/ap/ap_maps.htm, accessed January 2014.

surface, thereby trapping a portion of the radiation within the atmosphere, leading to an increase in average temperature above what it would be absent the GHGs. This so-called greenhouse effect is a natural process that keeps the average surface temperature of the Earth close to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. However, increased emissions of GHGs from human activity are widely believed to contribute to a measurable change in global climate conditions. Of all the GHGs, CO_2 is the most abundant gas that contributes to climate change. The other GHGs are less abundant but have higher global warming potential than CO_2. To account for this higher potential, emissions of other GHGs are frequently expressed in the equivalent mass of CO_2, denoted as CO_2e.

GHG emissions would be generated during the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway from equipment exhaust, haul and delivery truck trips, and worker commute trips. However, these construction activities would be relatively minimal, and GHG emissions would be substantially less than the 10,000 metric tons of CO_2e per year significance threshold established by California Air Resources Board. The impact would be less than significant.

There would be no increase in LADWP personnel or vehicle trips during project operations and, therefore, no increased GHG emissions. Although there may be an increase in visitors to the Gorge as a result of the proposed project, the increase is not expected to generate a substantial number of net new vehicle trips and resultant GHGs emissions. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant during operations.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact. The proposed project would not generate substantial sources of construction or operational GHG emissions. The purpose of the proposed project is to implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition while simultaneously maintaining LADWP's power generation and water distribution capabilities. The proposed project would not conflict with any State or local climate change policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHGs. No impact would occur.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would be temporary in nature and would involve the limited transport, storage, and use of hazardous materials, including on-site fueling/servicing of construction equipment, and the transport of fuels, lubricating fluids, and solvents. These types of materials are not acutely hazardous. The storage, handling, and disposal

of these materials are regulated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, the Inyo and Mono County Fire Departments, and the Inyo and Mono County Health Departments. The transport, use, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials would occur in conformance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations governing such activities. Therefore, the short-term construction impact would be less than significant.

Long-term operation of the proposed project would not involve the transport, storage, generation, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, project operation would not pose a hazard to the public or the environment. No operational impact related to hazardous materials would occur.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. As discussed in Section VII(a) above, construction activities would involve limited transport, storage, and use of some hazardous materials, such as on-site fueling/servicing of construction equipment, and the transport of fuels, lubricating fluids, and solvents. These types of materials are not acutely hazardous, and compliance with existing federal, State, and local regulations would ensure that construction impacts related to reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials would be less than significant. As discussed above, the long-term operation of the proposed project would not involve the use or generation of any hazardous materials. No operational impact would occur.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact. The project site is located at the bottom of the Gorge, which is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and is operated by LADWP for power generation and water supply. There are no schools located within one-quarter mile of the Gorge. Further, the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle acutely hazardous materials. No impact would occur.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. The project site is not included on any hazardous waste site lists including the Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor database, the Cortese list, the Superfund Site list, or other lists compiled pursuant to Section

65962.5 of the Government Code.[11,12,13] Two sites within or adjacent to the Gorge are listed as sites in State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker database, one of which is closed and one of which is eligible for closure.[14] As such, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and no impact would occur.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The project site is not located within 2 miles of a public airport, nor is it located within an airport land use plan.[15] It would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area related to a nearby airport. No impact would occur.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The project site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.[16] It would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area related to a nearby private airstrip. No impact would occur.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The project site is not included in an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan of Inyo or Mono Counties. No temporary or permanent closures of public roads would occur as part of the proposed project. Additionally, project-generated traffic during construction and operation would be minimal. LADWP employs an on-site emergency response plan, which would be revised as required to address project construction activities. Therefore, no impact to emergency response plans would occur.

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Gorge is not located adjacent to urbanized areas or residential areas. The proposed project does not involve the construction or operation of new structures. During the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, construction crews would have fire-suppression equipment (such as fire extinguishers) available on

[11] California Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor *Database*. Website: http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/, accessed January 2014.

[12] California Department of Toxic Substances Control, *DTSC's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List – Site Cleanup (Cortese List)*. Website: http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed January 2014.

[13] United States Environmental Protection Agency, *National Priorities List*, Search by Location. Website: http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/query/queryhtm/nplmapsg.htm, accessed January 2014.

[14] California State Water Resources Control Board, *GeoTracker Database*, Search by Map Location. Website: http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/, accessed January 2014.

[15] Airnav.com, Airports search. Website: http://www.airnav.com/airports/, accessed January 2014.

[16] Ibid.

site to respond to the accidental ignition of a fire. The impact would be less than significant.

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less Than Significant Impact. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would result in the disturbance of soil and vegetation both within and beside the river channel. Additionally, these activities would require the use of equipment within and adjacent to the river channel, as well as storage of fuels, lubricants, and other hydrocarbon fluids and the fueling of equipment within the project area. This could temporarily increase the potential for soil erosion and increased turbidity, as well as potentially carry spilled substances and disturbed sediments into the water course and downstream. While these discharges could occur, their effect on water quality would be minimized through the implementation of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System GCSWP requirements, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit. LADWP would comply with GCSWP requirements by producing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, which would keep hazardous materials, sediment, and silt from being discharged to the waterway. The GCSWP also includes structural and nonstructural Best Management Practices and erosion control measures, tracking control, non-storm water management, waste management, construction materials control, and site management. As discussed in Section 1.7, these may include, but not be limited to, minimizing the extent of disturbed areas and duration of exposure, stabilizing and protecting disturbed areas, keeping runoff velocities low, and retaining sediment within the construction area, as well as the use as necessary of temporary desilting basins, silt fences, gravel bag barriers, soil stabilization, diversion dikes, interceptor swales. Compliance with the above-mentioned requirements would reduce sediment-laden runoff, prevent the migration of contaminants to and within surface waters, and ensure storm water discharges and in-river construction activities would not violate applicable water quality standards. Therefore, the short-term impacts on water quality from construction activities would be less than significant.

During operation of the proposed project, periodic peak flows would be released to help regenerate and maintain the riverine-riparian habitat within the Gorge by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground on floodplains to establish and extend riparian vegetation communities. The diversity of riparian habitats and the quality of pools, riffles, aquatic insect production, wildlife populations, and trout fishing are all expected to be improved by implementation of the proposed project. The existing riparian community as a whole would respond favorably to the proposed flow regime by developing resilience to peak flows, which would promote the establishment of new riparian and wetland plants in a wider corridor. The net effect would be to increase the

area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riparian habitat within the Gorge. Although peak flows may temporarily increase turbidity, short-term disturbances to water quality related to natural erosion and deposition processes would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the riparian-riverine ecosystem produced by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the protection and enhancement of water resources for beneficial uses, including fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics, and the impact would be less than significant.

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

No Impact. No groundwater wells exist within the project reaches, and groundwater is not proposed to be extracted as part of the project. As under current conditions, surface water would pass through the Gorge, and the adjacent tunnels and penstocks would continue to be used by LADWP as part of its water supply system. There would be no impact to groundwater supply and recharge.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner, which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed flow regime is intended to alter the flow levels within the Gorge and increase scour, erosion, and deposition, the purpose of which is to increase riparian vegetation within the river channel and the floodplain, and create deep pools and riffles that are suitable habitat for brown trout and other aquatic species. To implement the proposed project, facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of a fishway would be required. Work would occur within and adjacent to the river channel to protect LADWP power facilities and access roads in preparation for long-term release of the proposed project flows. As discussed in Section IX(a) above, LADWP would comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System GCSWP requirements and obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification and a Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit. Adherence to the permit requirements and compliance with the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan's structural and non-structural BMPs developed for the proposed project would minimize short-term construction-related impacts of erosion and siltation. The impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section IX(a) above, during operation of the proposed project, periodic peak flows would be implemented to help regenerate and maintain the riverine-riparian habitat by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground, thereby modifying the river. The net effect would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riparian habitat within the Gorge. Although peak flows may temporarily alter the existing drainage pattern, short-term disturbances to water quality related to natural erosion and deposition

processes would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the ecosystem produced by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the protection and enhancement of water resources for beneficial uses, including fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics, and the impact would be less than significant.

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner, which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IX(c) above, modifications to some structures in the stream channel would be implemented associated with the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway. BMPs would be implemented to control runoff from the project site during construction. Therefore, no flooding is expected to occur on or off site during construction. The impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section IX(c) above, long-term modifications to the stream channel are proposed through a regime of base and peak flows. The net effect would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riparian habitat within the Gorge. Although peak releases of water would cause short-term increases in flow in the Gorge, they would create immediate and long-term benefits to the ecosystem and would not result in wider flooding on or off site. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IX(a), BMPs would be implemented through the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan developed for the proposed project pursuant to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements to control runoff from the project site during construction and maintain water quality within the Gorge. Additionally, LADWP would obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification and a Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit. Adherence to the permit requirements would ensure a less than significant impact.

During operation of the proposed project, river flows would be contained within the Gorge and would not discharge to storm water drainage systems. The base and peak flows would be generated by water supply originating in Crowley Lake Reservoir, which is currently diverted through tunnels and penstocks for hydroelectric power generation. Diversion of this water down the river channel would not generate polluted runoff. No impact would occur.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

Less Than Significant Impact. Other than the construction sources of pollutants described above (i.e., potential soil erosion, turbidity, and fuels/lubricants from construction equipment), the proposed project would not include other potential sources of contaminants that could degrade water quality. As discussed in Section IX(a) above, LADWP would be required to comply with the requirements of a

National Discharge Elimination System permit, including preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and BMPs. Additionally, LADWP would coordinate with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification and a Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit and implement the permit conditions. Compliance with the permit requirements would ensure a less than significant short-term impact to water quality during construction.

As discussed in Section IX(a) above, during operation of the proposed project, periodic peak flows would be implemented to help regenerate and maintain the riverine-riparian habitat by scouring, transporting, and depositing sediment; reshaping stream bottoms by creating pools; submerging downed vegetation and woody debris to provide nutrients and physical structure to streams; and dispersing seeds to higher ground thereby modifying the river. The net effect would be to increase the area, recruitments, and structural diversity of riparian habitat within the Gorge. Although peak flows may temporarily create erosion, increase turbidity, and redeposit sediments and debris, short-term disturbances to water quality created by these natural processes would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the riparian-riverine ecosystem produced by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the protection and enhancement of water resources for beneficial uses, including fisheries, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics, and the operational impact would be less than significant.

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. Portions of the project site are located within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.[17] However, no housing is proposed to be constructed as part of the proposed project. No impact would occur.

h) Place within a 100-year flood area structures to impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IX(g) above, portions of the project site are located in a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.[18] As previously discussed, the proposed project would include the construction of new structures intended to protect power generation facilities or allow fish to pass upstream. However, these structures would redirect flows only in the immediate area, and all flows would remain within the river channel. In this regard, the proposed project would not increase the risk of flooding either on or off site. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

[17] Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, Search by Street Address. Website: http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/FemaWelcomeView?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1, January 2014.

[18] Ibid.

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project involves implementation of a flow regime that includes increased base and peak flows compared to existing conditions. Higher river flows during peak releases of water in the Gorge could pose a hazard to recreational users. Therefore, LADWP would limit public access to the Gorge during peak flow events, consistent with the need for public safety, and post warning and avoidance notices prior to and during peak flows to alert the public to the presence of high river flows that may make stream crossing, stream wading, fishing, rock climbing, or other recreation activities in the Gorge unsafe. The impact would be less than significant.

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. Seiches are oscillations generated in enclosed bodies of water usually as a result of earthquake related ground shaking. The Gorge does not provide the conditions in which a seiche could form. No impact would occur.

Tsunamis are large ocean waves caused by the sudden water displacement that results from an underwater earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption. Tsunamis affect low-lying areas along the coastline. The project site is located at high elevation, hundreds of miles from the Pacific Ocean and would not be subject to a tsunami. No impact would occur.

As discussed in Section VI(a)(iv) above, the walls within the Gorge are subject to landslides and rockfalls due to loosely consolidated sediments exposed to wind and water erosion. The walls are not subject to mudflows. Therefore, no impact would occur.

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The proposed project would not divide an established community. The project site is located entirely within the boundaries of the Gorge, which is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and operated by LADWP for power generation and water supply. Construction and operational activities would not occur outside of the LADWP property boundaries, and no public roads would be closed within the project vicinity. No separation of uses or disruption of access between land use types would occur as a result of the proposed project. No impact would occur.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact. The proposed project site is located entirely within the boundaries of the Gorge, which is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and operated by LADWP. The project site and surroundings are zoned OS (Open

Space) and RM (Resource Management) in Mono County, and NR (Natural Resources) and SFL (State and Federal Lands) in Inyo County. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition. No new habitable structures would be constructed or operated, and no new uses would be introduced into the project site. The Gorge would continue to be operated by LADWP for power generation and water supply. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the existing zoning or General Plan designations for the site. No impact would occur.

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

No Impact. The project site is not located in a natural community conservation plan area, and there is no habitat conservation plan applicable to the project site. As discussed in Section IV(f) above, the upper reach of the Gorge provides critical habitat for the Owens tui chub, a fish species listed as endangered by the State and federal governments. However, no modifications to the upper reach are proposed as part of the project, and no impact to the Owens tui chub would occur during either construction or operations. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. No impact would occur.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The project site is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and operated by LADWP for power generation and water supply. According to the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, there are no oil, gas, geothermal, or other wells located within the project site.[19] The project site is not mapped or known to contain an important mineral resource. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State. No impact would occur.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

No Impact. The project site is not delineated as a locally-important mineral resource recovery site in the Mono and Inyo County General Plans. Further, as discussed in Section XI(a) above, no active oil wells exist within the project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site, and no impact would occur.

[19] State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, DOGGR Online Mapping System. Website: http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doms/doms-app.html, accessed January 2014.

XII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of applicable standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less Than Significant Impact. Facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and construction of the fishway would create short-term, intermittent elevated noise levels generated by heavy equipment at and near work sites. Construction work would occur in remote parts of the Gorge owned and operated by LADWP. Activities such as fishing and rock climbing may occur within the Gorge, but no permanent noise-sensitive uses are present. Compliance with construction BMPs would minimize noise impacts to on-site recreational users. Further, the proposed project would not exceed the established noise standards of the applicable general plans because no permanent noise sensitive uses are located in the project vicinity. Therefore, the short-term noise impact would be less than significant.

The proposed project does not include new facilities such that new long-term noise sources would be created. Therefore, no operational noise impact would occur.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not be expected to result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway could cause localized groundborne vibration with heavy equipment activity; however, vibration would attenuate rapidly with distance and would be temporary and short-term. No vibration-sensitive land uses are located in close proximity to the Gorge. Thus, impacts from groundborne vibration or groundborne noise would be less than significant.

The proposed project does not include new facilities such that new long-term vibration sources would be created. No vibration impact would occur during project operations.

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

No Impact. As discussed in Section XII(a) above, operation of the proposed project would create no new permanent sources of noise. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a substantial permanent increase in noise levels above existing ambient levels. No impact would occur.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section XII(a) above, construction activities would create short-term, intermittent elevated noise levels at and near work sites. Construction work would occur in remote parts of the Gorge owned and operated by LADWP. Activities such as fishing and rock climbing may occur in the Gorge, but no permanent noise-sensitive uses are present. Compliance with construction Best Management Practices would minimize noise impacts to on-site recreational users. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less than significant temporary or periodic increase in noise levels.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The project site is not located within 2 miles of a public airport, nor is it located within an airport land use plan.[20] Furthermore, the proposed project would include no occupied facilities that would expose people to excessive noise levels related to aircraft use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The Gorge is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip. Furthermore, the proposed project would include no occupied facilities that would expose people to excessive noise levels related to aircraft use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include any residential or commercial functions and, therefore, would not result in a direct population increase. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition and would not increase the capacity of the power generation or drinking water supply systems derived from the Gorge. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in indirect population growth. No impact to population growth would occur.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project site is located entirely within the boundaries of the Gorge, which is land owned and controlled by the City of Los Angeles and operated by LADWP. The only residential uses within the project vicinity are for

[20] Airnav.com, Airports search. Website: http://www.airnav.com/airports/, accessed January 2014.

LADWP personnel, and no modification to these residences is proposed as part of the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not require the removal of existing housing. Neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would impact the number or availability of existing housing in the area, and construction of replacement housing would not be necessary. No impact to housing would occur.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. As discussed in Section XIII(b) above, the only residential uses within the project vicinity are for LADWP personnel, and no modification of these residences is proposed as part of the project. Neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would impact the number or availability of existing housing in the area. As such, no persons would be displaced, and construction of replacement housing would not be necessary. No impact would occur.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i) Fire protection?

No Impact. As discussed in Section 1.7 above, construction crews would adhere to fire safety protocols. During long-term project operations, there would be no increase in the capacity of power generated at or water distributed through the Gorge. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate population growth. Further, the project does not include the construction of any new habitable structures. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not require additional fire protection services or facilities. No impact to fire protection services would occur.

ii) Police protection?

No Impact. As previously stated, the proposed project would not generate population growth or provide new facilities. Therefore, construction and operation of the proposed project would not require additional police protection services or facilities. No impact to police protection services would occur.

iii) Schools?

No Impact. Because the proposed project does not include development of any residential uses, no direct increase in population would result. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition. It would not increase the capacity of the power generation or drinking water supply systems derived from the Gorge; therefore, no indirect increase in population elsewhere would result. Therefore, no increase in demand for local schools would result.

iv) Parks?

No Impact. Residential developments typically have the greatest potential to result in impacts to parks since these types of developments generate permanent increases in population. As stated previously, the proposed project does not include development of any residential uses and would not generate any new permanent residents that would increase the demand for local and regional park facilities. Therefore, no impact to parks would occur.

v) Other public facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include development of residential or commercial uses and would not increase the demand for other public facilities. The proposed project would not result in indirect population growth that could increase demand for other public facilities. No impact to other public facilities would occur.

XV. RECREATION

Would the project:

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. LADWP currently makes the Gorge property available to the public for limited recreational use, including hiking, fishing, birding, and rock climbing. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition. During the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, as well as during peak flow events, there would be short-term impacts to recreational users. Increased noise from construction activity and limited access to the Gorge surrounding construction sites could temporarily and periodically limit recreational activity in the Gorge. Additionally, LADWP would limit public access to the Gorge during peak flow events, consistent with the need for public safety.

The diversity of riparian habitats and the quality of pools, riffles, aquatic insect production, wildlife populations, and trout fishing are all expected to be improved by implementation of the proposed project, thereby increasing the recreational amenities related to fishing and hiking. The limited short-term impacts to recreation during construction and operation would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the ecosystem produced by the proposed project and that would be available to recreational users the majority of each year. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase the use of existing nearby recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. The impact would be less than significant.

b) Include recreational facilities or require construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. As discussed in Section XV(a) above, expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels at the Gorge are expected to increase the recreational value of

the Gorge and potentially increase the number of recreational users visiting the Gorge. However, the proposed project does not involve the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Would the project:

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

Less Than Significant Impact. During the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway, there would be a minor increase in vehicle traffic, including construction worker commute trips and construction related truck trips. Vehicle traffic would access the Gorge via US 395. Due to restrictions related to LADWP service roads, no oversize trucks would be used. Construction activity would be spread out among multiple sites within the Gorge, potentially simultaneously, depending on the types and locations of activities. However, spread over the projected schedule, the number of net new daily trips during the construction period would be minimal, and they would not significantly impact roadway volumes or performance.

Trucks would travel at reduced speeds and would utilize short deceleration and acceleration lanes on US 395, potentially slowing the flow of traffic on US 395 and posing a nuisance to other travelers on the highway. Therefore, as discussed in Section 1.7 above, LADWP would implement the guidelines and measures of the Work Area Protection and Traffic Control Manual developed by the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Committee. LADWP would work with Caltrans and Mono and Inyo County Public Works/Roads Departments to establish a construction traffic control plan, which may include as necessary advanced signage for motorists, use of flag persons to direct traffic, and other measures to maintain the flow of traffic. With the implementation of a traffic control plan during construction, short-term traffic impacts would be less than significant.

Operation of the proposed project would not require an increase in LADWP personnel or truck deliveries at the Gorge. The expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels are expected to increase the recreational value of the Gorge and may attract additional visitors. However, the increase in visitors is not expected to be substantial due to the difficulty accessing the Gorge. Therefore, the impact during project operations would be less than significant.

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

Less Than Significant Impact. There would be no permanent impacts related to traffic congestion. As discussed above, construction vehicles associated with the

facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway could cause vehicle slowing on US 395 in the vicinity of the Gorge. However, this activity would be intermittent and short-term. There may be a minor increase in traffic during project operations because the expanded riparian habitat and higher water levels may increase the number of recreational visitors to the area. However, the increase in visitors would not be substantial due to the difficulty accessing the Gorge. Therefore, conflicts with the county congestion management program would be less than significant.

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. The Gorge is not located within close proximity to an airport. Further, construction and operation of the proposed project would not generate air traffic or include structures that could act as a hazard to aircraft navigation. No impact would occur.

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not increase roadway hazards due to design features or incompatible uses. No modifications to public roadways are proposed as part of the project. Project construction traffic would access the site via US 395. Therefore, as discussed in Section 1.7 above, to avoid potential conflicts, LADWP would implement the guidelines and measures of the Work Area Protection and Traffic Control Manual developed by the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Committee. LADWP would work with Caltrans and Mono and Inyo County Public Works/Roads Departments to establish a construction traffic control plan, which may include as necessary advanced signage for motorists, use of flag persons to direct traffic, and other measures. Therefore, no increased hazards would be created, and no impact would occur.

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above, the service roads accessing the Gorge are restricted to LADWP and emergency service vehicles. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway could temporarily and intermittently hinder emergency access to the Gorge due to narrow roadway widths. However, LADWP would work with local authorities to prepare a construction traffic control plan and emergency response plan to ensure that emergency service personnel would have access to the Gorge in the event of an emergency. With implementation of a construction traffic control plan and emergency response plan, the impact to emergency access during construction activities would be less than significant.

During operations, there would be no restrictions to emergency access created by the proposed project. No impact would occur.

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities. Construction activities would take place entirely within the Gorge property, which is owned and operated by LADWP, and would not require the removal or relocation of alternative transportation facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared for the proposed project that would specify appropriate BMPs and erosion control measures to limit runoff from the project site during construction. Additionally, the proposed project would comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements. Construction activities would comply with all applicable wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure a less than significant short-term impact. There would be no wastewater discharges during operation of the proposed project. No long-term impact would occur.

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition. These improvements would not increase the amount of water used or wastewater generated. Thus, no new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities would be required. No impact would occur.

c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. The proposed project would implement a flow regime intended to establish and maintain a fishery in good condition in the Gorge. These improvements would not increase the amount of storm water generated during either construction or operations. Therefore, no new or expanded storm water drainage facilities would be required. No impact would occur.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

No Impact. No new structures or facilities would be constructed requiring the use of potable water. The proposed project involves the diversion of water through the Gorge instead of through the existing tunnel and penstock system. However, the same amount of water as under existing conditions is expected to flow into Pleasant Valley Reservoir during project operations to meet LADWP's water delivery commitments. Therefore, no additional water supplies are anticipated to be needed. No impact would occur.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact. No new structures would be constructed or operated as part of the proposed project. Therefore, no new demand for wastewater treatment would be created. No impact to wastewater treatment capacity would occur.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Less Than Significant Impact. The facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and the construction of the fishway would generate relatively minor amounts construction waste. However, the proposed project would incorporate source reduction techniques and recycling measures to divert waste away from area landfills in accordance with county and State requirements. These measures would minimize the amount of construction waste that would need to be disposed of in an area landfill. Any non-recyclable construction waste generated would be disposed of at a landfill approved to accept such materials. Operation of the proposed project would not generate solid waste. The impact would be less than significant.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. The proposed project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. As discussed in Section XVII(f) above, construction debris would be recycled or disposed of according to State standards. All materials would be handled and disposed of in accordance with existing local, State, and federal regulations. No impact would occur.

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IV(a) above, the proposed project may result in losses of individual plants, fish, and/or wildlife during construction and operation of the proposed project. However, these short-term localized losses would be offset by the immediate and long-term benefits to the

ecosystem produced by the proposed project within the Gorge. The proposed project flows are expected to support larger populations of plant, fish, and wildlife species. The impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Section V(a) above, no prehistoric or historic cultural resources have been recorded within the Gorge. Further, no prehistoric or historic cultural resources have been previously encountered during ground disturbing activities, including construction and maintenance activities within the Gorge. Therefore, the proposed project would not eliminate an important example of California history or prehistory. No impact to historic or prehistoric resources would occur.

b) Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section III(c) above, the proposed project would generate additional air pollutant emissions during construction and operations; however, these increases would be short-term and relatively minor. Therefore, the impact to air quality would not be cumulatively considerable.

As discussed in Section VII(a) above, GHG emissions contribute to global climate change. Because this is an issue that is by its very nature cumulative, California Air Resources Board has established a threshold of significance and climate reduction strategies. The proposed project would generate short-term emissions of GHGs during construction, but virtually no emissions during operations. The emissions generated during construction would be far below the established threshold of significance. Therefore, the impact related to GHG emissions would not be cumulatively considerable.

As discussed in Sections XII(c) and XII(d) above, construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in a substantial increase in vehicle trips or other noise-generating activity in the Gorge. There would be no cumulatively considerable increase in ambient noise levels.

As discussed in Section XVI(a) above, the facility protection, reinforcement, and/or modification activities and construction of the fishway would generate some additional vehicle trips on a short-term and temporary basis. Additionally, during operations, there may be a small increase in vehicle trips associated with increased recreation visitation to the Gorge. However, these increases would not be cumulatively considerable.

c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less Than Significant Impact. During peak flows, high water levels could pose a safety hazard to rock climbers, hikers, and others attempting to cross the river. As discussed above, access to the Gorge would be temporarily restricted, consistent with the need for public safety, and warning signs would be posted alerting recreational users to potential dangers. These measures would ensure that there would be no adverse effect to human beings. The impact would be less than significant.

SECTION 4.0
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