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Project Title:	Soda Mountain Solar
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Document Title:	Section 3-16 Recreation
Description:	This Section evaluates the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts the Project may have on recreational resources and identifies any required Applicant-Proposed Measures (APM) and any required Mitigation Measures.
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3.16 RECREATION

This section evaluates impacts to the existing recreational resources within the general vicinity of the project that may result directly or indirectly from the proposed project. This section discusses these existing recreational resources, describes the laws and regulations relevant to these resources, identifies the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) criteria used for determining the significance of environmental impacts, and lists applicant-proposed measures (APMs) that would be incorporated into the project to avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts to the extent feasible.

For the purposes of the analysis in this section, "general vicinity" is defined as the area within 10 miles of the project site. This study area was selected to consider potential impacts to recreation because it captures all major recreation resources that contribute to baseline conditions and that have the potential to be affected by activities related to the project. For the purpose of this section, the terms off-road vehicles and off-highway vehicles (OHVs) are used interchangeably.

3.16.1 Regulatory Setting

3.16.1.1 Federal

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) establishes public land policy and guidelines for administration and provides for the management, protection, development, and enhancement of public lands such as would be subject to the requested right-of-way (ROW) grant. Under FLPMA, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for the development of energy resources on BLM-administered lands in a manner that balances diverse resource uses and considers the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources. Among those uses, FLPMA recognizes that the public lands should be managed in a manner that will provide for outdoor recreation. Pursuant to Title 11, Section 202(b)(9) of the FLPMA, BLM is required to coordinate with local governments in land use planning activities.

MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The National Park Service (NPS)c developed the General Management Plan in 2002 to guide the overall management strategy for the 1.6 million-acre Mojave National Preserve for a 10- to 15-year period. The plan focuses on the purposes of the preserve, its significant attributes, what activities are appropriate within specified constraints, resource protection strategies, and its mission in relation to the overall mission of the NPS (NPS 2002).

CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA PLAN

The 25 million-acre California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) contains over 12 million acres of public lands spread within the area known as the California Desert, which includes the following three deserts: the Mojave, the Sonoran, and a small portion of the Great Basin (BLM 1999). Approximately 10 million acres of the CDCA public lands are administered by the BLM.

Lands within the project site were designated Class L (Limited Use), Class M (Moderate Use), and Class I (Intensive Use) under the CDCA Plan (BLM 1999). The classifications were based on the sensitivity of resources and type of uses for each geographic area. Lands designated Class L are suitable for recreation that generally involves low to moderate user densities. Allowed recreation opportunities include

backpacking, primitive camping, hiking, rockhounding, nature study, and similar low-intensity uses, as well as motorized vehicle touring on approved routes of travel. On Class M lands, in addition to Class L uses, recreation activities are allowed that may involve moderate to high user densities, such as competitive motorized vehicle events on existing routes of travel. The Class I designation allows all Class L and M uses, in addition to off-road vehicle uses in open areas.

The CDCA Plan includes 12 plan elements, including a Motorized-Vehicle Access (MVA) Element that establishes the travel management framework for the CDCA, including some activity-level decisions for popular locations, and a Livestock Grazing Element that established geographic boundaries of livestock allotments, the types of forage use, and the upper limits on the stocking levels in each of the allotments.

WEST MOJAVE PLAN AMENDMENT

The 2006 West Mojave (WEMO) Plan Amendment to the CDCA Plan covers an area of 9.4 million acres in the western portion of the Mojave Desert in southern California, covering parts of San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Kern, and Inyo Counties (BLM 2006). Among these are 3.2 million acres of public lands, including the project site. The WEMO Plan Amendment presented a comprehensive strategy to conserve and protect the desert tortoise and over 100 other sensitive species and their habitat, as well designating a motorized route network and managing livestock grazing.

DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) is an interagency plan developed by the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Energy Commission, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (BLM 2016a). This land use plan functions as an amendment put in place over the CDCA, Bishop Resource Management Plan and Bakersfield Resource Management Plan. This plan was developed to address the need for a landscape approach to renewable energy and conservation planning in the California desert.

The plan covers 22.5 million acres of public land in seven California counties: Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Among other goals, the DRECP streamlines renewable energy and transmission development by establishing development focus areas deemed suitable for renewable energy generation and production. The DRECP LUPA also includes a list of over 200 Conservation and Management Actions (CMAs) that prescribe avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation actions which are applicable to new projects on BLM-administered lands in the DRECP plan area.

The DRECP LUPA includes land use allocations to replace the multiple-use classes established in the CDCA Plan. The project is within lands classified as General Public Lands for management, which do not have a specific land allocation or designation. These areas are available to renewable energy applications, but do not benefit from permit review streamlining or other incentives. While the project is currently sited within the management area encompassed by the DRECP LUPA, the BLM Record of Decision (ROD) for the project was issued prior to the implementation of these land use conservation plans and takes precedence over its enforcement (BLM 2016a).

WEST MOJAVE ROUTE NETWORK PROJECT

The West Mojave Route Network Project (WMRNP) was developed by the BLM and adopted in 2019. The WMRNP applies to the 3.1 million acres of public lands within the WEMO planning area. It was developed in response to litigation associated with the 2006 WEMO Plan, as well as recent BLM transportation and travel management guidance. The WMRNP was prepared specifically to develop a comprehensive strategy for the protection of sensitive plants and animals and resulted in nine travel

management areas (TMAs) to establish new route designations for 5,997 miles of OHV Open and Limited routes and 230 miles of OHV Closed routes that include non-motorized and non-mechanized use designations (BLM 2019a).The factors used in the development of boundaries for the TMAs are primarily natural transportation boundaries (e.g., highways, jurisdictional, geographic boundaries).

The WMRNP is being undertaken, in part, to complete the required Transportation and Travel Management (TTM) planning process for the WEMO Planning area. As discussed in BLM's TTM Handbook (H-1342-1), every acre of BLM-managed public land must be designated as "Open", "Closed", or "Limited" Areas for OHV use. These area designations were made for the entire WEMO Planning Area in the CDCA Plan and were updated as part of the DRECP in 2016. As part of the planning area's TTM planning efforts, each individual linear transportation feature within "Limited" areas must also be designated as either

- A Road, Primitive Road, or Trail that is part of the designated travel network;
- Transportation Linear Disturbance (not part of the travel network, i.e., closed routes); or
- A Temporary Route (not part of the travel network, e.g., routes available exclusively to one or more right-of-way or easement holders over a specified timeframe).

Within the OHV Limited areas, individual linear transportation features are also further designated as either "OHV Open", "OHV Limited", or "OHV Closed". Both OHV Open and OHV Limited routes are used by motorized vehicles. OHV Open routes are open to public use without limitations, while OHV Limited routes are subdesignated to indicate their type of limitation. These include subdesignations of routes for Administrative, all-terrain/utility vehicle (ATV/UTV), Authorized/Permitted, Competitive event, motorcycle, seasonal, and street legal–only use. OHV Closed routes include "Non-Motorized" and "Non-Mechanized" routes, as well as "Transportation Linear Disturbances". The travel network alternatives developed for evaluation in the WMRNP consist of different combinations of these designations, as needed to meet different access, use, and resource protection objectives.

JOHN D. DINGELL JR. CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, AND RECREATION ACT

The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Dingell Act) was signed into law on March 12, 2019 and includes provisions affecting public lands nationally, including the permanent authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Every Kid Outdoors Program, improvements to public land access, and more. The NPS developed a priority list of lands in parks of at least 640 contiguous acres that have significantly restricted or no public access. Additional considerations included the potential for public access and the likelihood of resolving the absence of or restriction to public lands.

The Dingell Act designated the new Soda Mountains Wilderness Area and designated the Rasor OHV recreation area.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES (43 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS 8340 ET SEQ.)

This regulation establishes criteria for designating public lands as open, limited, or closed to the use of OHVs and for establishing controls governing the use and operation of OHVs in such areas, while protecting resources, promoting safety, and minimizing user conflicts. Recreation use under Title VI "includes the use, where appropriate, of off-road recreational vehicles."

3.16.1.2 State

There are no state regulations, plans, or policies related to recreation that are relevant to the project.

3.16.1.3 Local

The project is located on federally owned land managed by the BLM. While it is not subject to County of San Bernardino land use plans and ordinances, local plans were reviewed for informational purposes.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTYWIDE PLAN

The San Bernardino Countywide Plan (San Bernardino County 2024a), adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2020, updates and expands the County's General Plan by addressing the physical, social, and economic issues facing the unincorporated portions of the county. The Countywide Plan consists of the Policy Plan, the Business Plan, and a communities plan. The Policy Plan, based on the former General Plan, consists of 11 elements: Land Use, Housing, Infrastructure and Utilities, Transportation and Mobility, Natural Resources, Renewable Energy and Conservation, Cultural Resources, Hazards, Personal and Property Protection, Economic Development, and Health and Wellness. The Business Plan consists of a policy-based governance element along with an implementation plan. The communities plan consists of 35 Community Action Guides that provide a framework for communities to create future character and independent identity through community actions.

The following policies identified in the Natural Resources element of the San Bernardino Countywide Plan are relevant to this analysis (San Bernardino County 2024b).

> **Goal NR-3 Open Space, Parks, and Recreation** A system of well-planned and maintained parks, trails, and open space that provides recreation opportunities for residents, attracts visitors from across the region and around the country, and preserves the natural environment.
>
> - **Policy NR-3.1 Open space preservation.** We regulate land use and coordinate with public and nongovernmental agencies to preserve open space areas that protect natural resources, function as a buffer against natural hazards or between land uses, serve as a recreation or tourist destination, or are central to the identity of an unincorporated community.
> - **Policy NR-3.4 Land exchange**. We coordinate with state and federal agencies to exchange publicly owned lands in order to provide additional areas for open space, recreation, and resource protection. We also request the right of first refusal on publicly owned lands made available for purchase to the public.
> - **Policy NR-3.9 Local parks, trails, and recreation**. We support the provision of local and community parks, trails, and recreational programs and facilities in unincorporated areas when a locally-approved funding and financing mechanism is established to pay for acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operations. We encourage unincorporated communities to apply for funding and cooperate with them in their funding applications for local trails that are identified in a non-motorized transportation plan that is accepted or adopted by the County. We also encourage, where feasible, local trails to be separated from vehicular traffic to improve the safety of trail users.

3.16.2 Environmental Setting

3.16.2.1 Project Site

The project site is located to the east and west of Interstate 15 (I-15). Two interstate interchanges provide access to the public lands immediately adjacent to the project site: Zzyzx Road (Exit 239) and Rasor Road (Exit 233). A commercial highway service center at the Rasor Road Exit provides fuel, towing, telephone, and a convenience store to highway and public land visitors. Except for Rasor Road, the entire project site

is undeveloped, and the entire project site is within sight and sound of I-15. Rasor Road is an unimproved BLM public access road that runs from the southwest corner of the site and branches approximately 1.4 miles from I-15. The Rasor Road fork continues from west to east to the adjacent Rasor OHV recreation area. Arrowhead Trail, the other fork, continues northward through the project site.

3.16.2.2 Public Access

The Rasor Road exit on I-15 (Exit 233) provides the primary access route to the project site and provides access through the project site to the Rasor OHV Recreational Area. From this road, there is a small network of travel routes through the area. Zzyzx Road provides vehicle access to the portion of the Mojave National Preserve closest to the project site.

From the Basin Road exit on I-15 (Exit 230) recreational users can travel on Basin Road to the Rasor OHV recreation area, Mojave Road, and the east end of Afton Canyon Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Traveling north from Exit 230, recreational users can access the Cronese Lakes Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC). No recreational facilities are provided on these routes.

From the Afton Canyon Road exit on I-15 (Exit 221), Afton Canyon Road is the primary access to Afton Canyon SRMA and Afton Canyon Campground. The Afton Canyon Campground is the closest BLM visitor facility to the project site, a direct distance of approximately 12.0 miles.

WEST MOJAVE ROUTE NETWORK PROJECT

The project site is located in two separate subregion TMAs of the WMRNP: TMA1 and TMA5 (BLM 2019b). For each TMA, maps have been published that include the current legal motorized road and trail network in limited use areas on BLM-administered lands in the West Mojave Planning Area (BLM 2011a, 2011b). Motorized use is permitted only on routes signed "Open." Motorized use of any closed route is punishable by fine or criminal prosecution (BLM 2019b).

TMA1 contains the portion of the project site south of I-15. Two Open routes are located within or immediately adjacent to the boundaries of the proposed project: AC8828 and AC8826. An unnumbered remnant of the Arrowhead Trail Highway is also located in this portion of the project site and is designated as a Limited route. Table 3.16-1 provides additional information about vehicle routes near the project site (BLM 2012a).

TMA5 contains the project generation-tie line and switchyard facilities north of I-15. Five Open routes provide access through and around the project site: CL8837, CL8839, CL8841, CL8845, and CL8847. There are also several Closed routes in the vicinity of the project site (BLM 2012b).

Table 3.16-1. Vehicle Routes in the Immediate Vicinity of the Project Site

Route Identification	Route Description
AC8826	Originates at I-15, Exit 233, and is a less than 1-mile dead-end route to an area behind Rasor Services. The route is outside of the project site boundary at the southwest corner.
AC8828 (Rasor Road)	Originates at I-15, Exit 233, is the primary access route to Rasor OHV recreational area, and traverses through the center of the proposed south array for approximately 3 miles. The segment of AC8828 between I-15 Exit 233 and an intersection of a Limited route at Township 12 North, Range 7 East, Section 12, E½, San Bernardino Meridian, was once known as Arrowhead Trail Highway. There are no formal facilities along the route, but dispersed camping is allowed within the recreation area.
Arrowhead Trail Remnant	A remnant of the Arrowhead Trail continues from AC8828, branching at the location noted in AC8288, and continues northerly to I-15. It is identified as a "Limited Route."

CL8837	A segment of the Arrowhead Trail Highway, originating at Zzyzx Road (North), is located approximately 0.5 mile northwest of I-15, Exit 233, paralleling I-15 between the interstate and the proposed north array.
CL8839	A route originating on CL8847 which follows the existing 500-kilovolt transmission line outside the northwest extent of the requested ROW boundary and the southeast boundary of Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The route crosses the requested ROW boundary before it connects with CL8837.
CL8841	From I-15 (Exit 233), vehicles traveling north on open route CL8841 can connect to vehicle routes (CL8846, CL8849, CL8845) situated between I-15 and the Soda Mountain WSA's southern boundary. No recreational facilities are provided on this route.
CL8845	A route known as the Opah Ditch Road, which connects routes CL8837 and CL8839 and passes through the project site. The intersection of CL8845 and CL8839 is the location of the project's proposed substation and collector route termini.
CL8847	Originates at I-15, Exit 239, is known as Zzyzx Road, and connects with CL8837 and CL8839. From I-15, CL8847 provides public access to the Soda Mountain WSA, Blue Bell Mine Road, and to vehicle routes (CL8846, CL8849, CL8845) that are situated between I-15 and the Soda Mountain WSA's southern boundary. No recreational facilities are provided along these routes.

Sources: NPS (2024); BLM (2010a, 2010b).

3.16.2.3 Recreation Resources Surrounding the Project Site

Most of the project site and immediate vicinity are used for dispersed recreation use with no facilities or developed recreation sites, other than the Rasor OHV Recreational Area to the south. The NPS and BLM are the primary recreational opportunity providers in the general vicinity of the project. While each agency manages a unique set of recreational opportunities for desert visitors, the NPS facilities attract the vast majority of recreation visitors in the region. These resources are shown in Figure 3.16-1.

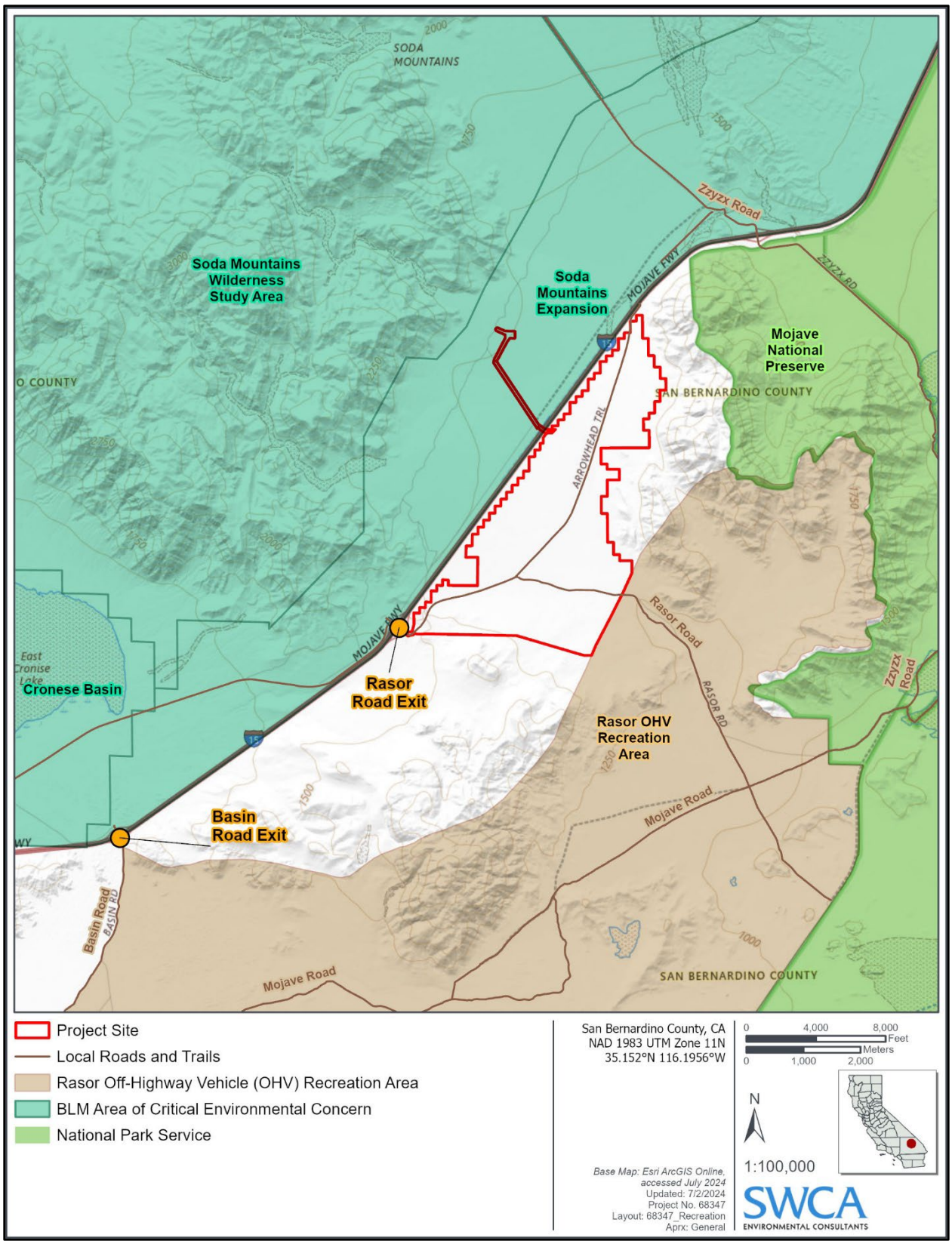

Figure 3.16-1. Recreational resources map.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rasor Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area

The approximately 24,000-acre Rasor OHV recreation area, managed by the BLM, is located immediately adjacent and southeast of the project site. It is designated as a SRMA under the DRECP, the primary objective of which is to manage this area for remote semi-primitive motorized recreation (BLM 2016b). It is designated as an OHV Open route which is open to public use without limitations. Primary recreational activities within the Rasor OHV recreation area include driving and touring with motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, sand rails, and four-wheel drive vehicles. In addition, there are opportunities for hiking, rock scrambling, rockhounding (study and collection of minerals), botany, and wildlife viewing; primitive camping is allowed. The Rasor OHV recreation area is open to recreational shooting with the exception of the Afton Canyon Natural Area/ACEC, described below. In addition to the Rasor Road access (I-15, Exit 233), off-road vehicles users also are able to access the recreation area via Basin Road (I-15, Exit 230) (BLM 2024a).

Soda Mountain Expansion ACEC and Wilderness Study Area

The approximately 16,720-acre Soda Mountain Expansion ACEC encompasses the area to the east of I-15 and the southern border of the Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (BLM 2016c). The Soda Mountain Expansion ACEC provides important plant and wildlife connectivity between surrounding WSAs that encompass large blocks of intact habitat.

The approximately 88,780-acre Soda Mountain WSA is another distinct BLM management area adjacent to the project site, located less than 0.5 mile from the northwest boundary. Cronese Lakes and Mesquite Hills/Lucero Hills ACECs are located approximately 3.5 miles and 5.8 miles from the project site, respectively. However, none of these WSAs or ACECs is a SRMA, and no special management prescriptions for recreation purposes are in effect; instead, all are managed as dispersed recreation areas.

Afton Canyon Natural Area/Area of Critical Environmental Concern

The Afton Canyon Natural Area/ACEC, part of the Mojave Trails National Monument, is approximately 11 miles southwest of the project site. Afton Canyon encompasses approximately 41,500 acres, of which about 23,600 acres are managed by the BLM (BLM 2016c). Visitor use is concentrated at Afton Canyon Campground, approximately 12.0 miles from the project site. There are 22 recreational campground sites and picnic facilities. The campground is also used to stage OHVs to the adjacent Rasor OHV recreation area.

In addition to the campground, the primary activities include hiking, hunting, nature study, rockhounding, horseback riding, vehicle touring, and astronomy. The primary access to Afton Canyon recreation facilities is from I-15, Exit 222. This is the closest developed BLM recreation facility to the project (BLM 2024b).

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The 1.6 million-acre Mojave National Preserve, managed by the NPS, is located west of the Rasor OHV recreation area. The preserve is a vast expanse of desert lands that represent a combination of Great Basin, Sonoran, and Mojave desert ecosystems. Approximately 700,000 acres of the preserve is designated Wilderness. Recreational activities within the preserve include camping, picnicking, hiking, mountain and trail biking, visiting historical sites, nature study and wildlife viewing, attending interpretative programs, and stargazing (NPS 2002). The majority of the recreation visitors access the center of the preserve from Interstates 15 and 40 via Ivanpah, Kelbaker, and Cima Roads (NPS 2022a).

The Mojave National Preserve is located near the Zzyzx Road exit from I-15. South of I-15, Zzyzx Road extends approximately 5.0 miles into the preserve, ending at historic Zzyzx, which houses the California State University Fullerton's Desert Studies Center. Recreation facilities at Zzyzx include parking, a self-guided tour around Lake Tuendae, wayside exhibits, vault toilets, and a picnic area. NPS does not report visitor use estimates for this portion of the preserve (NPS 2022b).

Table 3.16-2 provides a comparison of visitor use data from 2019 to 2023 and highlights the peak months of visitation.

Table 3.16-2. Reported Recreation Visits to the Mojave National Preserve (2019–2023)

Year	Total Annual Visits	Peak Month	Peak Month Visits	Peak Month Visits Per Acre
2019	841,516	April	74,705	0.047
2020	608,633	January	72,830	0.046
2021	866,635	December	88,855	0.056
2022	773,463	December	88,483	0.055
2023	1,178,998	April	199,990	0.125

Source: NPS 2024.

Major recreation facilities in the preserve are the Kelso Depot Visitor Center, Hole in the Wall Information Center, Hole in the Wall Campground, Mid Hills Campground, and Black Canyon Group and Equestrian Campground. These facilities are more than 30 miles from the project site.

STATE AND LOCAL

No State of California Recreation Area or San Bernardino County Regional Park is located in the project vicinity. The closest local recreational facility is Chet Hoffman Park in Baker, California. This facility, operated by the Baker Community Services District, provides playgrounds, sports fields, and a community hall for the residents of Baker. The facility is located approximately 7 miles from the project site (Baker Community Services District 2024).

3.16.3 Impact Analysis

3.16.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The determinations of significance of project impacts are based on applicable policies, regulations, goals, and guidelines defined by CEQA. Specifically, the project would be considered to have a significant effect on recreation if the effects exceed the significance criteria described below:

1. 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.
2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Each of these thresholds is discussed under Section 3.16.3.4, Impact Assessment, below.

3.16.3.2 Methodology

This section analyzes potential effects of the proposed project related to recreation and assesses the impacts to known recreational uses. The CDCA Plan, as amended, which includes a detailed inventory and designation of open routes for motorized vehicle use, was reviewed to determine impacts to open routes.

3.16.3.3 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The applicant identified and committed to implement the following APMs as part of the proposed project to avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts to recreation, to the extent feasible. The APMs, where applicable, are discussed in Section 3.16.3.4 below.

- **APM REC-1:** Travel Management Area Maps for the project site showing open, closed, and limited travel routes and open off-road vehicles areas shall be updated and printed by the applicant for posting by the BLM during each phase of the project when the status or location of routes and/or open areas changes as a result of project construction, operation and maintenance, and/or decommissioning. These notices and signs shall clearly describe which routes and open areas will be closed temporarily or permanently.

3.16.3.4 Impact Assessment

Impact REC-1: 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? (Less than Significant)

The project does not include a residential component that would contribute new residents who could cause an increase in the use of existing recreational facilities. It is assumed that a substantial majority of the construction workforce would be sourced primarily from the existing regional labor pool. An average of 200 construction workers would operate daily on-site, with an anticipated 300 construction workers during peak construction activities. During operations, the project would be remotely controlled, eliminating the need for permanent on-site employees; however, a workforce of approximately 25 to 40 personnel would visit the substation on an as needed basis for maintenance, equipment operation, and/or security. Nonetheless, some project workers could add to the existing number of users of local, regional, or other parks and recreational facilities.

No existing neighborhood or regional parks are located on or adjacent to the project site. The nearest neighborhood park is Chet Hoffman Community Park, which is located in Baker approximately 7 miles northeast of the project site. Other recreational facilities that could be affected by the construction workforce include federal recreational areas such as the Rasor Road OHV Recreation Area, Mojave National Preserve, and Afton Canyon Natural Area. There is no indication that any of these opportunities or facilities are at or nearing their capacities for use. The Mojave National Preserve General Management Plan does not provide a quantitative standard for the preserve's carrying capacity (NPS 2002). However, the Mojave National Preserve received just 0.125 visits per acre in April of 2023, the highest month of recorded visits since 2019 (see Table 3.16-2). The construction workforce could contribute an incremental increase in the existing demand for parks and recreation but is not expected to cause substantial physical deterioration of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.

The project's proximity to Rasor Road may deter attendance to the Rasor OHV recreation area by the use of Rasor Road, incrementally. However, for the same reasons described above, the possibility of a minor displacement of use within the open area would not affect the open area's capacity for use and therefore would not cause or accelerate the substantial physical deterioration of the open area.

Given the project would not result in a new or permanent population that would substantially increase the use of recreational facilities, implementation of the project would not result in an associated increase in the use of nearby existing recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of any existing recreational facilities would occur or be accelerated. Impacts would be **less than significant.**

Impact REC-2: Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? (Less than Significant)

The proposed project would not introduce new recreational facilities, nor would require the expansion of existing recreational facilities. However, the project would utilize Rasor Road as the primary access road into the site, which also provides access to the Rasor OHV recreation area. The project would close Rasor Road during the approximately 18 months of project construction for site security. During that time, public access to the Rasor OHV recreation area would be maintained from the Basin Road exit on I-15, reducing potential impacts to recreation facilities and maintaining off-road vehicles access. The project would implement APM REC-1 to communicate any access changes to the public. At the start of project operations, the road would be reopened to public access. Therefore, the closure of the access road would be temporary and would not require the construction or expansion of additional vehicle access or visitor facilities.

The project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Impacts would be **less than significant.**

3.16.4 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

3.16.5 Cumulative Impacts

Impact C-REC-1: Would the impacts of the proposed project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, contribute to a cumulative impact related to recreation? (Less than Significant)

The projects considered in the cumulative context are located in areas with low recreation use, similar to the project site, and are expected to affect few if any recreational facilities. The temporary and permanent workforces of these projects are not likely to use the same recreational sites as for the project. Therefore, no significant cumulative impact on recreational facilities would occur to which the project could have a cumulatively considerable contribution.

No mitigation measures are required other than those already implemented on a resource-by-resource basis as discussed in other sections of this Environmental Impact Report. The less-than-significant impact would not be cumulatively considerable because no other projects could cause impacts that would combine with those of the project to cause or contribute to any significant adverse cumulative condition in or near the affected roadway segment.

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