



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

RENÉE E. BAHL
DIRECTOR

Administrative Office: (858) 694-3030
Fax: (858) 495-5841
Reservations: (858) 565-3600

www.sdparks.org

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

February 12, 2009
Revised June 1, 2009

Project Name: El Monte Trail and Equestrian Staging Area

This Document is Considered Draft Until it is Adopted by the Appropriate County of San Diego Decision-Making Body.

This Mitigated Negative Declaration is comprised of this form along with the Environmental Initial Study that includes the following:

- a. Initial Study Form
 - b. Environmental Analysis Form and attached extended studies for Biological Resources and Cultural Resources
1. California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration Findings:

Find, that this Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the decision-making body's independent judgment and analysis, and; that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information contained in this Mitigated Negative Declaration and the comments received during the public review period; and that revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the project applicant would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur; and, on the basis of the whole record before the decision-making body (including this Mitigated Negative Declaration) that there is no substantial evidence that the project as revised will have a significant effect on the environment.



2. Required Mitigation Measures:

Refer to the attached Environmental Initial Study for the rationale for requiring the following measures:

A. Biological Resources

1. Significant impacts to 0.66 acre of Diegan coastal sage scrub (Tier II) habitat associated with construction of the proposed trail will be mitigated at a 1.5:1 ratio and will consist of onsite planting of coast live oaks within a disturbed portion of the Park in order to restore a total of 1.0 acre of disturbed habitat to coast live oak woodland (Tier I habitat). The 1.0- acre mitigation site will be contiguous to an existing 300-foot vegetated wetland buffer and 18.3 acres of coastal sage scrub and southern coast live oak riparian woodland habitat areas, which will be maintained onsite thereby adding to the conserved habitat onsite. The restoration area will be initially irrigated for up to two years to ensure oak tree establishment and will be monitored and managed in accordance with the Resource Management Plan for El Monte County Park (under preparation). Additionally, the area will be fenced and public access will be restricted within a future trail easement that will connect to future trail easements to the north.
2. In order to mitigate potentially significant indirect impacts to nesting success of protected raptors and migratory bird species, seasonal construction restrictions will be adhered to. Vegetation clearing or grading on the project site shall be restricted during the breeding/nesting season from February 1 through August 15 annually unless pre-construction surveys by a qualified biologist determine no nesting birds or raptors would be impacted by the proposed work. If active nests are identified within the impact area, vegetation clearing activities shall not occur within 300 feet of active bird nests, 500 feet of tree-nesting raptor nests, and 800 feet of ground-nesting raptor nests, until either the breeding season has ended or the nest is no longer active.
3. The proposed trail and staging area will be managed in accordance with a Resource Management Plan, to be prepared by the County, in order to mitigate potentially significant impacts that could occur to sensitive wildlife through loss of habitat, increased human access or competition from domestic animals, and decreased nesting success. Ongoing management of the Park will identify unauthorized trail use or other adverse effects associated with increased human use (e.g. trash, off-road activity). Such issues will be addressed through the construction of fence segments, installation of signs, or other means. In addition, the County will fence the staging area.
4. Restrict all brushing and clearing and/or grading such that none will be allowed within 300 feet of coastal sage scrub habitat during the breeding season of the coastal California gnatcatcher. This is defined as occurring

between March 1 and August 15 annually. This condition may be waived through written concurrence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game that no coastal California gnatcatcher are present in the vicinity of the brushing, clearing or grading as verified by coastal California gnatcatcher protocol surveys.

B. Cultural Resources

1. The proposed trail alignment will avoid the prehistoric bedrock milling features by more than 100 feet, the maximum distance feasible given topographic constraints (i.e., grade requirements) and the need to connect to an existing off-site trail easement.
 2. The proposed trail alignment will avoid the San Diego Flume tunnel façade by up to 30 feet, or the maximum distance feasible given topographic constraints (i.e., grade requirements) and the need to connect to an existing off-site trail easement, and will not directly impact this historical resource. Any potential indirect impacts from increased human access to the area will be mitigated by placement of signs along the trail that read, "Please Stay on Trail".
 3. An archaeological monitor will be present for all ground disturbing activities that will take place near the existing cultural resource sites within the Park. If an intact cultural deposit is found during monitoring, a more extensive testing program will be implemented, or a new alignment will be chosen, and a Native American monitor will be contacted to aid in identification and evaluation of the resource. All artifacts and associated records that may be discovered during monitoring shall be appropriately curated with an appropriate institution.
3. Critical Project Design Elements That Must Become Conditions of Approval:

The following project design elements were either proposed in the project application or the result of compliance with specific environmental laws and regulations and were essential in reaching the conclusions within the attached Environmental Initial Study. While the following are not technically mitigation measures, their implementation must be assured to avoid potentially significant environmental effects.

Biological Resources

- Trail alignment will avoid impacts to San Diego sunflower plants and spiny redberry observed within the proposed project impact areas. These species will be flagged by a biologist prior to trail construction.
- Trail construction near individual coast live oak trees or within coast live oak woodland habitat will be achieved by hand in order to avoid impacts to mature coast live oaks or oak tree recruitment.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- The project will implement site design measures, source control, and/or treatment control BMPs to reduce potential pollutants, including sediment from erosion or siltation, to the maximum extent practicable. BMPs are required during construction activities and will include, but are not limited to, features such as stabilized construction entrance/exit areas, permeable surfaces, and silt fencing. Silt fences and fiber rolls would be specified to minimize surface transport of sediments. These measures will control erosion and sedimentation and satisfy waste discharge requirements as required by the Land-Use Planning for New Development and Redevelopment Component of the San Diego Municipal Permit (RWQCB Order No. R9-2007-0001), as implemented by the San Diego County Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program (JURMP) and Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP).

Transportation/Traffic

- A safe and adequate sight distance will be provided at all staging area driveway entrances to the satisfaction of the Director of the County of San Diego Department of Public Works.

Air Quality

- Dust control measures will be implemented as necessary during trail and staging area construction.

ADOPTION STATEMENT: This Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted and above California Environmental Quality Act findings made by the:

Board of Supervisors (Decision-Making Body)

on August 5, 2009 (11) (Date/Item #)



Megan Hamilton, Group Program Manager
Department of Parks and Recreation