

**XX. WILDFIRE** – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

a) **Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

- Potentially Significant Impact**                       **Less than Significant Impact**  
 **Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated**                       **No Impact**

**Less Than Significant Impact:** As discussed under threshold IX.e, the proposed project would not conflict with the Operational Area Emergency Plan, the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the San Diego County Nuclear Power Station Emergency Response Plan, the Oil Spill Contingency Element, the Emergency Water Contingencies Annex and Energy Shortage Response Plan, or the Dam Evacuation Plan for the County of San Diego. The proposed project also would not conflict with the Ramona Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which identifies areas of potential risk and provides hazard reduction priorities. The proposed project would not conflict with any of the priorities and would not conflict with mapped evacuation routes. In addition, a Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan would be prepared for the project site, which would include guidance for emergency response and evacuation in the case of a wildland fire (refer to Section IX. *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, for further discussion of the contents of the Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan). This Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan would be developed to be consistent with the existing Operational Area Emergency Plan, the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Ramona Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which provide guidance for regional emergency response. The Boulder Oaks Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan would provide evacuation routes, safety procedures, and emergency contact information to assist staff during an evacuation of the park facility. The Site Evacuation Plan would only apply to the Preserve boundaries and would supplement and not conflict with the OES and the Operational Area Emergency Plan evacuation planning and guidance for the region.

Additionally, the Boulder Oaks Fire Services Operational Assessment (Assessment), prepared by Rohde & Associates for the Fire Marshal, San Diego County Fire Authority, on February 18, 2020 (Appendix F), indicates the proposed project does not present a significant increase in demand for regional fire services. Fire agencies are equipped to provide for service demands presented by the proposed use of the Preserve. The analysis of emergency response by fire services in the Assessment indicates four fire facilities in the vicinity of the Preserve would be able to access the main access point and the west side of the Preserve within the SDCFA response standard for rural areas. The Assessment indicates response deeper into the Preserve may take longer to accomplish and may require helicopter resources. Fire and rescue helicopters are operated by the County of San Diego and would be equipped to handle this type of emergency response. The Assessment also concludes the additional 32 vehicles onsite that would result from the proposed project would not significantly affect evacuation of the Mussey Grade area. Thus, the existing fire services in the region can provide sufficient emergency response related to fire and rescue at the Preserve, and the proposed project does not present a significant increase in demand on fire services that would impact emergency response or evacuation in the area.

Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact because future projects are required to comply with the County Codes and emergency evacuation plans. Potential impacts related to conflict with an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan would be less than significant.

**b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

- |                          |  |                                     |                                     |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Less than Significant Impact</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/>            | No Impact                           |

**Less Than Significant Impact:** The Preserve is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as designated by CAL FIRE in their *San Diego County Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA* (CAL FIRE 2009). The conditions of the Preserve, including the climate and vegetation, make it suitable for potential wildland fires, and the Preserve has burned during wildland fire events in the past. The Preserve currently has a groundwater well and two water tanks located near the ranger station, which are used for fire suppression. The park road and truck trails in the southern portion of the Preserve are periodically managed for brush encroachment, in an effort to keep the roads open for wildland firefighting efforts.

The proposed project would improve existing facilities and develop trails for recreational use throughout the Preserve. One additional volunteer pad would allow for temporary occupation of an RV on site; otherwise, the proposed project would not allow for additional permanent residential use on the Preserve. The primary use would be daytime passive recreation by walkers, hikers, bicyclists, and equestrian users. The proposed project would not change existing conditions or introduce new conditions to the project site that would exacerbate the existing high fire threat. However, by opening the Preserve up to the public, the proposed project could expose more people to the threat of wildfire, and the pollutant concentrations that result from wildfire events.

DPR would implement several standard operating procedures as part of the proposed project that would reduce the risk of wildfire spread on the project site and would ensure the safety of visitors, workers, and residents at the Preserve. Firstly, the proposed project would comply with County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 3, Division 5, Chapter 3 and Appendix II-A of the Uniform Fire Code. DPR currently complies with the Defensible Space for Fire Protection Ordinance (2011), and would continue to comply with the requirements of the ordinance as part of the proposed project. The ordinance requires combustible vegetation; dead, dying, or diseased trees; green waste; rubbish; or other flammable materials to be cleared within 30 feet of the property line and 10 feet of each side of a highway, private road, or driveway in order to maintain defensible space (County of San Diego 2011). The proposed project is also required to comply with the County of San Diego Fire Service Conditions stipulated by the County Fire Services staff (i.e., County Fire Marshall) upon review and approval of the proposed project. Secondly, as part of operations of the proposed project, signs would be clearly posted containing park rules and regulations that would be enforced at the Preserve, in compliance with San Diego

County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 4 Public Property, Division 1. Parks and Recreation, Chapter 1. County Parks and Recreation. These rules would be enforced by park ranges and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Smoking is prohibited.
- Campfires and open flames are prohibited.
- No person is allowed to use, transport, carry, fire, or discharge any fireworks, firearm, weapon, air gun, archery device, slingshot, or explosive of any kind across, in or into a County park.
- Parking must occur in designated staging areas.

Additionally, DPR would continue ~~best management practices~~ BMPs for fire protection, including the following:

- All maintenance vehicles must carry a fire extinguisher in case of accidental fire ignition.
- Brush encroachment along roads and truck trails will be managed.
- Two water tanks will be maintained for purposes of fire suppression.
- Grazing will be allowed for fuel management.

Lastly, DPR ~~would~~ has prepared a Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan (Appendix G) as part of operational planning for the proposed project. The Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan ~~would include~~ includes emergency contact information, evacuation routes and established meeting places, and safety protocol to ensure the safe evacuation of visitors, employees, and residents of the Preserve. The Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan ~~would be prepared to complement~~ complements the existing Ramona Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Operational Area Emergency Plan, which guide evacuation planning for the region. The Preserve would be closed to the public during a fire event or time of high fire risk.

The Assessment prepared by Rohde & Associates indicates the Preserve has characteristics that make it susceptible to large fire spread, including the vegetation, the steep slopes and alignment of the slopes, and the potential for Santa Ana wind conditions. The Assessment also indicates the proposed project design features and BMPs listed above were assessed to be reasonable and adequate for reducing fire ignition risks from proposed public access to the Preserve.

Therefore, with implementation of the BMPs listed above, compliance with the applicable County regulations, and implementation of the Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to the exacerbation of wildfire risks exposing occupants to pollutants or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire. Additionally, in combination with the cumulative projects, the proposed project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts from the exposure of occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire because all future projects would also be required to comply with applicable County regulations, as well as with the County of San Diego Fire Service Conditions stipulated by the County Fire Services staff (i.e., County Fire Marshall) upon review and approval of those projects.

**c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

- Potentially Significant Impact       Less than Significant Impact  
 Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated       No Impact

**Less than Significant Impact:** The proposed project would involve the widening of the existing entrance road into the Preserve to allow easier access for emergency vehicles to the project site, the expansion of the existing septic system, and the extension of overhead electricity from the ranger station to the proposed volunteer pad. These elements of the proposed project are improvements on the existing infrastructure present at the project site. Otherwise, the proposed project would not include installation of other new infrastructure, or ongoing maintenance of infrastructure that would not already occur as general maintenance at the project site. Water and electric utilities are currently present on site. A groundwater well is utilized on site to fill the two existing water tanks used for fire suppression during an emergency fire event. While utilities would be expanded at the site, DPR would continue to maintain existing fire breaks and regularly conduct brush management; and would comply with the existing County regulations developed for the purpose of fire protection, including the Uniform Fire Code and Defensible Space for Fire Protection Ordinance (please see Section IX *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, question g) for further discussion of these regulations). The Assessment conducted by Rohde & Associates indicates the existing structures onsite have sufficient defensible space surrounding these structures. DPR would continue to maintain defensible space around these structures, including the rebuilt restroom facility, as well as around the proposed staging areas. DPR would continue to conduct fuel modification along the entrance road to maintain a safe route for evacuation if necessary. DPR would also coordinate with the LDS facility staff to ensure safe use of the shared roadway in case of a wildfire event. The proposed project would not include any other fire prevention or suppression infrastructure, such as new fire breaks, that would result in impacts on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project would not include any activities related to infrastructure that would result in direct or cumulatively considerable impacts on the environment.

**d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

- Potentially Significant Impact       Less than Significant Impact  
 Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated       No Impact

**Less than Significant Impact:** The project site is located in a climate and topography that is prone to wildfires, and has natural habitats of vegetation that could be a fuel source for wildfires, especially during droughts or dry periods. Wildfire risk tends to be high in locations where dense vegetation occurs on a steep slope. Post-wildfire risks associated with slopes, including mudflow

or landslides, could occur when the vegetation that anchors soils to the hillside has burned, increasing the potential for mudflow or landslide in the event of heavy rains (CAL FIRE 2018).

The proposed project does not include features that would alter or exacerbate these existing conditions on the project site because the proposed project would rebuild the restroom building and associated septic system at the site of the existing restroom, and would not otherwise alter the existing slopes, hills, and other landform features of the Preserve. The proposed project would allow daily visitors to the Preserve, which is currently closed to the public, but it would not introduce new residential development. The proposed project would expose more people to the risk of post-wildfire hazards, including mudflow, landslide, or other forms of slope instability by allowing more people to use the Preserve for recreational purposes. However, the proposed project would not exacerbate the risk of post-fire hazards, because it would not permanently alter drainage patterns or increase surface runoff in such a way that would result in significant downslope flooding or landslides. While utilities would be expanded at the site, the County would implement standard safety practices, and would close parts of, or the entire Preserve, if safety risks associated with mudflows, landslides, or other post-fire hazards are identified at the Preserve. It is standard operating procedure for DPR to evaluate a park facility after a natural disaster, such as a wildfire, for possible unsafe conditions (i.e., downed power lines, fallen/unstable trees, unstable slopes, or washed out trails) prior to reopening the facility to the public. DPR would also continue to maintain fire breaks, manage brush on the project site, and to comply with the Uniform Fire Code and Defensible Space for Fire Protection Ordinance, which require the implementation of best practices for fire protection (please see Section IX *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, threshold question g. for further discussion of these regulations). The proposed project includes many project design features to reduce the potential to exacerbate the risk of wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire on the project site, including: rangers patrolling the site, prohibition of open flames, regular brush management, maintenance of defensible space, potential closure during wildfire events, coordination with the Fire Authority, and maintenance of fire suppression equipment such as vehicle fire extinguishers and onsite water tanks. The Assessment prepared by Rohde & Associates concluded these project features were adequate for the reduction of wildfire risk onsite. By complying with these measures, the proposed project would reduce potential wildfire risks within the project site. Therefore, with implementation of the standard operating safety procedures and compliance with regulations related to fire risk and protection, the proposed project would not result in significant direct, or cumulative, impacts related to exposing structures or people to significant risk associated with post-fire downslope flooding or landslides.

**Appendix F**  
**Boulder Oaks Fire Services Operational Assessment**

**Appendix G**  
**Wildfire Site Evacuation Plan**