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4.13 RECREATION

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.13.1 Introduction

This section of the PEA describes the existing conditions and potential project-related impacts to recreational areas as a result of short- or long-term conditions associated with the implementation of the Proposed Project. In addition, this section analyzes consistency with any applicable recreational plans or policies. A recreation area is defined herein as any site or facility that is used for recreational activities, including national, State, county, city or private parks or trails; open space; cultural center or museum; campground; or private recreational site such as a golf course, amusement park, or amphitheater. No significant impacts are anticipated to occur during construction, operation, or maintenance of the Proposed Project.

4.13.2 Methodology

The recreation analysis within this section involved a review of various documents including aerial photographs of the Proposed Project area, the *Ramona Community Plan*, the *County of San Diego General Plan*, the *Simon Preserve Resource Management Plan*, the BLM’s *South Coast Resource Management Plan*, and other relevant government planning documents were reviewed to identify potential recreational resources within the Proposed Project area as well as online information sources. The review also included the use of GIS data. Site visits confirmed existing recreational resources within the Proposed Project area.

4.13.3 Existing Conditions

Segments of the Proposed Project are located within Simon Preserve and Mt. Gower Preserve, and are located near public trails within both preserves. The segment within Simon Preserve extends across the preserve for a total distance of approximately 1.1 miles. Within Mt. Gower Preserve segments cross through two portions of the preserve, with the two segments totaling approximately 1.1 miles of distance within the preserve boundaries. The Simon Preserve is a 617-acre preserve located outside of the community of Ramona, and has over five miles of multi-use trails available for use including a 550-foot climb to Ramona Peak. The Simon Preserve is open to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The Mt. Gower Preserve is a 1,574-acre preserve located southeast of the community of Ramona, and includes approximately eight miles

of trails. The area is open to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The preserve features dense chaparral, meadows, oak woodlands, and shaded stream habitats that provide a wide range of habitats for wildlife. In addition, there is a youth area available for groups up to 50 individuals, and water and restrooms are available at the trailhead. The public lands within the Mt. Gower Preserve are under a lease to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department. BLM retains ownership of these lands. SDG&E will place signs near the affected trailheads, advising the public of the Proposed Project and potential temporary impacts to trail users.

4.13.3.1 Regulatory Background

Communities of Ramona and Santa Ysabel

The *Ramona Community Plan* (2010) provides guidance for the community of Ramona and the surrounding area, including the San Diego Country Estates. The *Ramona Community Plan* is a portion of the *San Diego County General Plan* that provides goals and policies for the community. The goals and policies were developed based on analysis by the Ramona Community Planning Group.

The *Ramona Community Plan* contains the following relevant policies and goals:

Policy COS 2.1.22: Require regional and local recreational facilities are in harmony with the community character.

The *Central Mountain Subregional Plan* (2011) provides guidance to the communities of Cuyamaca, Descanso, Guatay, Pine Valley, and Mount Laguna. The *Central Mountain Subregional Plan* is a portion of the *San Diego County General Plan* that provides goals and policies for the included communities.

The *Central Mountain Subregional Plan* contains the following relevant policies and goals:

Scenic Highways and Visual Resources Goal 1: The protection and enhancement of scenic views, wildlife habitats, native plant materials, historical and recreational resources within scenic highway corridors.

Open Space Goal 2: A system of open space that preserves unique natural features, enhances recreational opportunities, conserves scenic resources, and retains the peaceful beauty of the subregion.

Recreation Goal 1: Encourage coordination among public agencies providing recreational amenities.

Recreation Goals 6: Provide a system of parks, open space, riding and hiking trails, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities which will preserve the rural mountain lifestyle sought by the residents of Pine Valley and Descanso Planning Areas.

The *North Mountain Subregional Plan* (2011) provides guidance to the communities of Santa Ysabel, Warner Springs, Palomar Mountain, Mesa Grande, Sunshine Summit, Ranchita, and Oak

Grove. The *North Mountain Subregional Plan* is a portion of the *San Diego County General Plan* that provides goals and policies for the included communities.

County of San Diego

The County of San Diego General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element

The *County of San Diego General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element* provides guidance for future growth in the County of San Diego related to the conservation of natural and cultural resources, protection of open space, and provision of parks and recreational opportunities. The Conservation and Open Space Element discusses goals and policies involving the conservation of biological resources, water resources, agricultural resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, mineral resources, visual resources, air quality, and recreational facilities. The Conservation and Open Space element contains the following relevant policies:

COS-23.1 Public Access. Provide public access to natural and cultural (where allowed) resources through effective planning that conserves the County's native wildlife, enhances and restores a continuous network of connected natural habitat and protects water resources.

Simon Preserve Resource Management Plan

The Simon Preserve is approximately 617 acres in size and is located from approximately 2 miles southeast of the City of Ramona to approximately 13 miles northeast of the City of Poway. The *Simon Preserve Resource Management Plan* is a document that guides activities within the Simon Preserve in order to protect the biological and cultural resources present in the preserve. The *Simon Preserve Resource Management Plan* not only catalogues the existing habitats, species, and resources within the preserve; it also guides future management of these resources and outlines operations and maintenance requirements for meeting management goals. The Simon Preserve is open to the public for passive recreation, and includes designated trails as well as maintenance roads used as informal trails. However, off-road vehicle activity, hunting, fishing, swimming, camping, smoking, off-trail biking, and littering are prohibited activities within the Simon Preserve.

South Coast Resource Management Plan

The Mt. Gower Preserve is located southeast of the community of Ramona and contains approximately eight miles of multi-use trails. The BLM *South Coast Resource Management Plan (1994)* is a document that guides the activities on BLM-owned lands for San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and Los Angeles Counties. The BLM is in the process of revising the *South Coast Draft Resource Management Plan*. This area covers nearly nine million acres, with approximately 300,820 acres of that land being BLM-administered public land. The Mt. Gower Preserve is located within this BLM planning area, and is thus subject to the *South Coast Resource Management Plan*. This plan outlines measures that will maintain the recreational opportunities within the area, ensure compliance with habitat conservation plans, and continue the conservation and stewardship of these lands through collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies.

Mt. Gower Open Space Preserve Rules and Regulations

The BLM-administered public lands within the Mt. Gower Preserve are under a lease to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department. The San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department provides Rules and Regulations for public use of the Preserve in *Mt. Gower Open Space Preserve Rules and Regulations for Open Space Preserves (2000)*.

4.13.4 Potential Impacts

4.13.4.1 Significance Criteria

Thresholds of impact significance were derived from Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. These guidelines note when a proposed project could have a potentially significant impact to recreation, as follows:

- 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; or
- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

4.13.4.2 Question 13a – 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?

Construction – Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project does not require the construction of new recreational facilities; and it would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, as it would not result in an increase in population. Segments of the Proposed Project are located within Simon Preserve and Mt. Gower Preserve, near public trails. During construction it may be necessary to temporarily close off sections of trails in order to keep the public at safe distances away from the construction area. The Mt. Gower HLZ is located within a County park parking lot within the Mt. Gower Preserve, and would require coordination during construction to maintain a proper safety buffer between the public utilizing these facilities and the construction areas. The helicopter use at this site would be limited as it would only be needed to remove one pole. This work will be done mid-week to minimize disruption to trail users, as the parking lot will be closed while the helicopter is in use. One segment of existing fence may have to be temporarily removed to allow for construction vehicle access. SDG&E will coordinate with the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department for the anticipated duration of construction. Signs will be placed at the affected trailheads, informing trail users of the Proposed Project and potential temporary impacts to trails. The construction activities within the preserves may be considered as an increased use of the recreational areas; however, the construction activity will be temporary in nature and not cause substantial physical deterioration of the preserves.

Though these temporary disruptions in the use of trails may be a temporary inconvenience to users of these trails, other public recreational options would remain available during the closures

– including other parts of both preserves and other open space parks such as the Santa Ysabel West and Santa Ysabel East Preserves located approximately 1.5 miles to the northwest and northeast of the Proposed Project. Construction-related impacts to recreation at the open space preserves would be less than significant.

Visitors to the recreational facilities in the area may experience a slight temporary increase in noise, dust, and odors from construction equipment and helicopter use during construction of the Proposed Project. These increases would occur periodically and intermittently over a period of no longer than nine months, as described further in Section 4.3, Air Quality and Section 4.10, Noise. In addition, air quality and noise impacts would be minimized with the implementation of the APMs described in Section 4.3, Air Quality and Section 4.10, Noise. As a result, impacts to recreation as a result of construction of the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

SDG&E has incorporated several design features into the Proposed Project description in order to minimize any temporary impacts that could occur. These design features are listed below in 4.13.5, Policies, Standards, Regulations, and Project Design Features.

Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project would not create a need for additional housing or long-term population immigration that would result in a permanent increase in park use. No new employees would be hired to operate or maintain the Proposed Project facilities.

SDG&E currently maintains and operates extensive existing electric power, distribution and substation facilities throughout the Proposed Project site, and the Proposed Project is the reconstruction of existing electric facilities within existing SDG&E ROW and substation property. SDG&E's existing facilities and operations and maintenance activities are included in the baseline for evaluating the impacts of the Proposed Project. Operations and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project would decrease slightly compared to baseline conditions due to the increased reliability of the new power line components included in a typical wood to steel replacement project, the installation of fewer poles along the alignment, and the relocation of poles outside of jurisdictional features. Any future potential maintenance-related construction projects would be evaluated under G.O. 131-D and CEQA for purposes of assessing whether further CPUC approval is required. Therefore, no impacts to recreation uses are anticipated.

4.13.4.3 Question 13b – Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Construction and Operation & Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of any existing recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment; therefore, there are no impacts.

4.13.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions

With implementation of the project design features and ordinary construction restrictions (as outlined within Section 3.8) potential impacts relating to recreation and recreational facilities will remain less than significant.

4.13.6 Applicant Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project has no significant impacts relating to recreation or recreational facilities; therefore, no APMs are proposed.

4.13.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

Based on the preceding analysis, no significant impacts relating to recreation are anticipated from the Proposed Project.

4.13.8 References

- U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) *South Coast Resource Management Plan (1994)*.
Online:
http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pdfs/palmsprings_pdfs/sc_rmp.Par.24754.File.dat/South-Coast-RMP&ROD-1994.pdf. Site visited November 2012.
- U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) *South Coast Draft Resource Management Plan (2011)*. Online:
http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Draft_Resource_Management_Plan_and_EIS.html. Site visited November 2012.
- County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation website (2012). Online:
<http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/parks/>. Site visited November 2012.
- County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation, *Mt. Gower Open Space Preserve Rules and Regulations for Open Space Preserves (2000)*. Online: http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/parks/openspace/Mt_Gower.html. Site visited November 2012.
- County of San Diego, Ramona Community Plan (2010), Online:
http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/docs/draftgp/complan/ramona_070109.pdf.
Site visited February 2012.
- County of San Diego, Resource Management Plan for Simon Preserve (2010), Online:
http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/reusable_components/images/parks/doc/Simon_RMP_Final_Clean.pdf. Site visited February 2012.
- Google. Google Earth Version 2.0. Software. Program used February 2012.