B.3.5 Cultural Resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

B.3.5.1 Setting

Paleontological Resources

Typically significant fossils found in California are of late Quaternary and Tertiary age and include invertebrate, vertebrate, and plant fossils. Older fossils are also found in the southern California area but are not as prevalent. Geologic units underlying the Project consists of primarily of Recent alluvium, with smaller areas of Pleistocene alluvium, Pleistocene lake deposits, and Mesozoic granitic rocks underlying portions of the subtransmission/fiber optic telecommunication cable alignment through Salt Wells Valley and Salt Wells Canyon. In the Searles Lake basin, where replacement of six poles is planned, the alignment traverses a narrow band of Recent alluvium located immediately adjacent to Pleistocene lake deposits on both sides. The Recent alluvium along the Project alignment in the Searles Valley area likely shallowly overlies the Pleistocene lake deposits.

A Paleontologic Resources Inventory for the Downs Substation Expansion Project was conducted for SCE by Cogstone Resource Management, Inc. (SCE, 2010). This report was a paleontologic literature study to determine if paleontological resources may be impacted by the Proposed Project. The Cogstone report indicates that the Project is located in an area that contained extensive middle to late Pleistocene pluvial lakes which have yielded abundant middle to late Pleistocene vertebrate fossils in addition to paleoenvironmentally important micro fossils like ostracods (small crustaceans). Vertebrate fossils found in the pluvial lake deposits (Pleistocene lake deposits) include birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians, many now extinct.

Records and literature searches by Cogstone indicated that although no fossil localities are known directly along the Project routes, similar Quaternary lake deposits of nearby China Lake have yielded numerous fossil resources of late Pleistocene age including mammoth (Mammuthus), sabre-toothed cat (Smilodon), large and small horses (Equus), camel (Camelops), llama (Hemiauchenia), deer (Odocoileus), bison (Bison), and freshwater invertebrates. Sedimentary deposits in the Searles Valley area (sediments deposited by Searles Lake) are likely to have similar fossil resources to those in China Lake due to their similar age, dispositional history, and regional proximity. Additionally, Searles Lake sediments are known to have yielded freshwater invertebrates including bivalves, snails and ostracods. Similarly, although no localities are known from other Pleistocene deposits near the Project, similar sediments in the Mojave Desert have produced numerous Pleistocene fossils. No fossil localities are known for Recent alluvium in the region and the Mesozoic granitics would not contain fossils.

Cultural Resources

Prehistory

The following paragraph from Volume I: Report and Appendices A and D, Downs Substation Cultural Resources Survey, San Bernardino and Kern Counties, California (Duran et al., 2010a) summarizes the prehistoric setting for the Proposed Project area.

Recent efforts by Sutton et al. have attempted to produce an integrative model that establishes a standard nomenclature for temporal sequences and cultural complexes. Previously, the interchangeable use of the terms "period" and "complex" have led to some confusion because they define both time periods and cultural entities. In an effort to minimize confusion, the prehistoric context follows the model established by Sutton et al. by using climatic periods (e.g., early Holocene, middle Holocene, etc.) to specify temporal spans and cultural complexes (e.g., Lake Mojave Complex, Gypsum Complex, etc.) to describe the cultural entities that existed within those time spans. Chronological periods are grouped into the late Pleistocene, terminal Pleistocene, early Holocene, middle Holocene, and late Holocene intervals. The chronological sequence shown in Table B.3.5-1 is adapted from Sutton et al. (Duran et al., 2010a:2-3).

Table B.3.5-1. Cultural Chronology

Date	Temporal Period	Cultural Complex	Previously Known As
Pre-12,000 cal* BP	Late Pleistocene	Pre-Clovis	Early Man Pre-Projectile Point
12,000–10,000 cal BP	Terminal Pleistocene	Paleo-Indian	Clovis Big Game Hunting Tradition
10,000–8,000 cal BP	Early Holocene	Lake Mojave	Western Pluvial lakes Tradition San Dieguito Complex
9,000–5,000 cal BP	Middle Holocene	Pinto	Little Lake
		Deadman Lake	N/A
4,000–1,800 cal BP	Late Holocene	Gypsum	Newberry
1,800–900 cal BP		Rose Spring	Saratoga Springs I Haiwee
Cal BP 900–Present		Late Prehistoric	Shoshonean Marana Protohistoric

*cal = calibrated, BP = before present, N/A = not available
Source: Duran et al., 2010a:

Ethnography

The following paragraphs from *Volume I: Report and Appendices A and D, Downs Substation Cultural Resources Survey, San Bernardino and Kern Counties, California* (Duran et al., 2010a) summarize the ethnographic setting for the Proposed Project area.

Ethnographic and linguistic data suggest the territories of three adjacent groups, the Coso (Koso; Panamint) Shoshone, the Tubatulabal, and the Kawaiisu, intersected and probably overlapped in the vicinity of Indians Wells Valley. Thus, the area was probably used during the annual rounds of all three groups. The core area of the Kawaiisu is thought to be the better-watered Tehachapi Mountains and extreme Southern Sierra Nevada; however, David Earle and J. Underwood have recently proposed a division between the "Mountain Kawaiisu" inhabiting the traditional core area in the Tehachapi

Mountains, and the "Desert Kawaiisu" occupying the desert areas east of the Tehachapis, including the southern halves of Panamint and Death Valleys, the southern Panamint and Argus Ranges, and Searles Valley in the vicinity of Trona (Duran et al., 2010a:2-8, 2-9).

These areas are also considered Kawaiisu territory by J. H. Steward. J. P. Dayley also includes Indian Wells Valley, as well as the southern Argus Range, in Panamint Shoshone territory. There are a few ethnographic accounts of Tubatulabal and Coso Shoshone activities in Indian Wells Valley, but apparently none documenting the Kawaiisu. However, some researchers believe the Kawaiisu used the area in prehistoric times (Duran et al., 2010a:2-9).

The Coso region immediately north of Indian Wells Valley is in the territory of the Coso and Panamint Shoshone, who, like the Kawaiisu, were (and some remain) speakers of a Numic language. Descendants of the Coso and Panamint Shoshone are today members of the federally recognized Timbisha Shoshone and Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone tribes. Due to intermarriage and trade relations with adjacent tribal groups, including the Tubatulabal, Kawaiisu, Owens Valley Paiute, and Southern Paiute, residents of villages on the perimeters of this territory were multilingual. Recent research conducted by David Earle, who analyzed linguistic data collected by A. L. Kroeber and J. H. Steward, and by J. Underwood, who compared descriptions of social organization, settlement and subsistence patterns, and winter dwellings of the Coso Shoshone and desert-dwelling Kawaiisu in the ethnographic literature, points to a probable connection between the two groups (Duran et al., 2010a:2-9).

Regional History

The following paragraphs from *Volume I: Report and Appendices A and D, Downs Substation Cultural Resources Survey, San Bernardino and Kern Counties, California* (Duran et al., 2010a) summarize the regional history for the Proposed Project area.

The historic period in California can be divided into three main eras: Spanish (1769–1821), Mexican (1822–1846), and American (1848–present). The Spanish period begins in 1769, when the first permanent Spanish settlement, Mission San Diego de Alcala, was founded on July 16. Early Spanish settlement took the form of missions, which were founded to convert Native Americans and then transfer the land back to them once they had demonstrated ability to manage the land; presidios, which provided military protection; and pueblos, which were secular towns (Duran et al., 2010a:2-10, 2-11).

The first European Americans to travel through the vicinity of the Project area is likely the Padre Francisco Garces party, which came from the Tucson area through the Mojave Desert in 1776. The "Old Spanish Trail," an overland route linking Santa Fe with Los Angeles, was likely derived from older Native American routes; explorer John C. Frémont traversed this trail in 1845 with Captain Joe Walker when mapping Owens Valley. W. A. Chalfant names Walker as the first European American in the Owens Valley in 1833, but there is also a possibility that Mountain Man Jedidiah S. Smith traveled through the area in 1826 (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11).

In 1821, the Mexican Republic was established after revolution against the Spanish crown, and California was designated a Mexican territory in 1824. During the Mexican era, the mission system was dismantled and secularized, and land was disbursed to Mexican citizens. As many as 600 land grants were approved during this time. The United States had declared war on Mexico in 1846, and after weakening resistance, the Mexicans surrendered in 1847 at the "Capitulation of Cahuenga," and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 2, 1848. Just a week earlier, James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, and the rush for gold began. In 1848, California became an American territory; amid the efforts of landowners to prove their Mexican property claims to the American government, tens of

thousands of fortune-seekers made their way to the gold fields, transforming Alta California in the process (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11).

It was during the Gold Rush that many more Americans began to look for overland routes to the gold fields that bypassed the formidable Sierras, and headed southward. The William Manly party traveled through the area in 1849–1850 and spent a harrowing few months in Death Valley. On the way, Manly mentions that "[a] party who called themselves 'The Jayhawkers' passed us and we followed along in the rear…" (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11). According to some sources, two of the members of the Jayhawkers party were brothers John and Dennis Searles, who would go on to settle in what is now known as Searles Valley and begin mining borax. It is likely that some of the gold-seekers who attempted the southerly route to the gold fields passed through Indian Wells Valley after crossing the southern Argus Range in January of 1850. These emigrants may have been the first European Americans to cross through the Project area (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11).

San Bernardino County was carved out of Los Angeles County in 1853. In 1866, Inyo and Kern Counties were formed from portions of Tulare and Los Angeles Counties. The discovery of silver and gold in the Coso Mountains in 1860 brought an influx of settlers to the area; the towns of Darwin, Panamint City, and Cerro Gordo were founded as a result (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11).

In 1862, the Searles brothers were prospecting for gold and silver in the Slate Range near the Panamint Mountains and discovered that a dry lake in the area was covered in borax. Only later, seeing the success of F. W. "Borax" Smith, would they realize that the substances could be mined and marketed. In 1874, the Searles brothers and associates staked a claim on the dry lake (now known as Searles Lake) for 640 acres and established the San Bernardino Borax Mining Company. The company was sold and then disbanded 20 years later, and other attempts to mine the area of surface borax failed. Not until 1910 did another entrepreneur, S. W. Austin, take control of the California Trona Company and drill for borax beneath the lake's surface, finding another substantial deposit of salts 100 feet deep. Mineral mining continues to this day on Searles Lake (Duran et al., 2010a:2-11, 2-12).

Transport of ore and minerals out of Indian Wells Valley became a pressing issue in the late nineteenth century. R. C. Jacobs, one of the discoverers of the Panamint lodes, traveled to Los Angeles to convince the city fathers to finance a road that would fork from the Bullion Trail between Los Angeles and Owens Valley at Indian Wells, then cross over the pass between the Argus and Slate Ranges. In 1874, Chinese laborers hired by Jacobs blasted a roadbed on the Slate Range crossing to connect Indian Wells with Panamint City. Chinese laborers also worked on railroad construction in Owens Valley in the 1880s and temporarily resided in the Indian Wells Valley, leading to the coining of the name China Lake to the dry lakebed in the area (Duran et al., 2010a:2-12).

In 1875, Remi Nadeau began construction of a freight road from Indian Wells to the silver mines near the newly established town of Darwin. The first route established by Nadeau passed through Mountain Springs Canyon, then headed north via Junction Station to the Darwin mines. Two freight stations on the Remi Nadeau freight road across Indian Wells Valley—Desert Station, at the south end of the China Lake playa, and Kelley's Station (also known as Fort Nadeau), near the mouth of Mountain Springs Canyon—were built to service Nadeau's teams. However, until the early 1900s, Indian Wells Valley remained sparsely populated. The invention of the evaporative cooler in 1937 in Imperial Valley revolutionized living standards throughout the desert communities of California; for the first time, families could consider year-round living in relative comfort (Duran et al., 2010a:2-12).

The settlement of Inyokern was established in the mid-nineteenth century as an agrarian outpost. Previously known as Magnolia, or Siding 16, the town grew in size with the creation of the Los Angeles

Aqueduct. A civilian airfield was built in 1935 as an emergency landing strip for commercial flights over the Mojave; the U.S. Army Air Corps and then the U.S. Navy commandeered the use of the airstrip (then known as Harvey Field) during World War II, and the field became the base of operations for initial naval weapons testing before the creation of the Naval Ordnance Testing Station (NOTS) Inyokern and Armitage Field. Today, Inyokern is a satellite community serving the nearby China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (CLNAWS) facility (Duran et al., 2010a:2-12).

Trona, named for the mineral consisting of sodium carbonate and bicarbonate, was established in 1914 with the opening of a post office. In 1916, the name was given to a railroad terminus at the location. The Trona Railway, a 30.7-mile shortline railroad developed to deliver chemicals and borax to the main Southern Pacific rail line from Searles Lake, was built in 1914. The railway also carried a passenger car that handled traffic from Trona to Searles Junction, which connected with the Southern Pacific. Trona functioned as a company town for the various mineral mining outfits in the area over the years; a 1948 brochure produced by the American Potash and Chemical Corporation extolled the fact that Trona was "a modern industrial village in the Mojave Desert" and "a self-contained town operated on a cost basis by the Company for the benefit of its employees" (Duran et al., 2010a:2-13). The nearby towns of Argus, West End, and Pioneer Point were established under similar circumstances (Duran et al., 2010a:2-12, 2-13).

The town of Ridgecrest, originally called Crumville, was a small agricultural community before officially changing its name in 1941 (reportedly by one vote) when the post office was renamed. A hand-drawn map from the 1930s shows feed lots, milking barns, and several homes separated by dirt roads. In 1943, the land north of the community was given to the U.S. Navy to develop a naval ordnance testing station for ground-to-air and air-to-air weapons. Ridgecrest was incorporated in 1963 after serving as a satellite community for the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) Inyokern, which would be renamed Naval Weapons Center (NWC) in the 1960s and finally CLNAWS in the 1990s (Duran et al., 2010a:2-13).

Applicable Regulations

Federal

Paleontological Preservation Act. The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA), part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (OPLMA), requires the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to manage and protect paleontological resources on federal land using scientific principles and expertise. The OPLMA-PRPA includes specific provisions addressing management of these resources by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) of the Department of Agriculture. The law affirms the authority for many of the policies that the federal land managing agencies already have in place for the management of paleontological resources such as issuing permits for collecting paleontological resources, curation of paleontological resources, and confidentiality of locality data. It only applies to federal lands. It provides authority for the protection of significant paleontological resources on federal lands including criminal and civil penalties for fossil theft and vandalism.

State

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resource Code sections 21000-21177.1). CEQA was adopted in 1970 and applies to most public agency decisions to carry out, authorize or approve projects that may have adverse environmental impacts. CEQA requires that agencies inform themselves about the environmental effects of their proposed actions, consider all relevant information, provide the

public an opportunity to comment on the environmental issues, and avoid or reduce potential environmental harm whenever feasible. Protection of paleontological resources (certain fossils found in sedimentary rocks) is included in the Cultural Resources section of CEQA. CEQA Section 21081.6 requires that the lead agency adopt a monitoring and reporting program to ensure compliance with mitigation measures developed during the environmental impact review process during a project's construction and operation.

CEQA also requires a lead agency to determine whether a project may have a significant effect on historical resources. If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (CEQA Guidelines Sections 21083.2(a), (b), and (c)). CEQA Guidelines Section 21083.2(g) describes a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

A *historical resource* is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (CEQA Statute Section 21084.1), a resource included in a local register of historical resources (CEQA Statute Section 15064.5(a)(2)), or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant (CEQA Statute Section 15064.5(a)(3)).

Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1, Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, and Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1 of the Statutes of CEQA were used as the basic guidelines for the cultural resources study. PRC Section 5024.1 requires evaluation of historical resources to determine their eligibility for listing on the CRHR. The purpose of the register is to maintain listings of the state‘s historical resources and to indicate which properties are to be protected from substantial adverse change. The criteria for listing resources on the CRHR were expressly developed to be in accordance with previously established criteria developed for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

According to PRC Section 5024.1(c)(1–4), as well as Section 15064.5(a)(3)(A-D) of the revised CEQA Guidelines, a resource is considered historically *significant* if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of installation, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or

4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Impacts to significant cultural resources that affect the characteristics of any resource that qualify it for the NRHP or adversely alter the significance of a resource listed on or eligible for listing on the CRHR are considered a significant effect on the environment. Impacts to *significant* cultural resources from the Proposed Project are thus considered significant if the Project physically destroys or damages all or part of a resource, changes the character of the use of the resource or physical feature within the setting of the resource that contribute to its significance, or introduces visual, atmospheric, or audible elements that diminish the integrity of significant features of the resource.

Under CEQA, if an archaeological site is not a historical resource but meets the definition of a "unique archaeological resource" as defined in PRC Section 21083.2, then it should be treated in accordance with the provisions of that section.

Local

Kern County General Plan. The Kern County General Plan provides for protection and preservation of paleontologic resources in Section 1.10.3 Archaeological, Paleontological, Cultural, and Historical Preservation Policy, which states that "In areas of known paleontological resources, the County should address the preservation of these resources where feasible" (Kern County, 2009).

San Bernardino County Plan. The San Bernardino County Plan provides the following policies for protection of paleontologic resources in the Conservation Element: in areas of potential but unknown sensitivity, field surveys prior to grading will be required to establish the need for paleontologic monitoring; projects requiring grading plans that are located in areas of known fossil occurrences, or demonstrated in a field survey to have fossils present, will have all rough grading (cuts greater than 3 feet) monitored by trained paleontologic crews working under the direction of a qualified professional, so that fossils exposed during grading can be recovered and preserved; and a report of findings with an itemized accession inventory will be prepared and submitted to the County as evidence that monitoring has been successfully completed (URS, 2007).

Approach to Analysis of Cultural Resources and Previous Cultural Resources Studies

Archaeological records and literature searches were conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center, housed at California State University, Bakersfield and the San Bernardino County Archaeological Information Center, located at the San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands. The searches included a literature review of all known relevant cultural resources site records, surveys, and excavation reports to determine potential archaeological resources within a one-half mile radius of the cultural resources study area, which is defined as the area within one-half mile of either side of the fiber optic telecommunication line route, and a one-half mile radius surrounding the proposed Downs Substation expansion site. Additional archival research was conducted at the National Archives Pacific Region research facility in San Bruno, California.

Seventy-three studies were identified within the cultural resources study area. These studies identified 25 cultural resources sites (two prehistoric and 23 historic-era) within the cultural resources study area. Of the 25 previously recorded archaeological sites that are within the cultural resources study area, three (CA-KER-6328H, CA-KER-7078H, and CA-SBR-11479H) are located within the Proposed Project Area of Direct Impact (ADI), and described below. The Proposed Project ADI represents the portions of the Project in which the maximum extent of potential ground disturbance would occur and includes the 4.6 acres adjacent to the existing Downs Substation (expansion area) and a 30-meter buffer on either side of the fiber optic telecommunication cable line route.

Site CA-KER-6328H consists of a large multi-episode historic-era refuse dump with numerous loci. Artifacts noted at the site include household refuse such as ceramics, glass, cans, scrap metal, concrete, milled wood, automobile parts, bedsprings, toilet fragments, barrel hoops, and sewage piping. Diagnostic artifacts date from the early 1930s to the early 1960s. While the site boundary spans nearly two blocks, the record for only the eastern half of the site was updated during the current investigation. The site was originally recorded with six loci; however, disturbances to the site have parceled the eastern section of the site into 11 different loci. Several two-track roads cut through the empty lot where the site is located, and the area is currently used as a parking lot for a nearby park (south of the site). Many of the loci within the site are bounded by the two-track roads that cross through the area. The majority of artifacts along the margins of each locus are likely in a secondary context because of the creation of the two-track roads in the immediate vicinity; overall site integrity has been impaired. Some modern refuse was noted within the trash scatter (Duran et al., 2010a and b). Site CA-KER-6328H is located on private land immediately west of the existing Downs Substation within the substation expansion area.

The parcel encompassing site CA-KER-6328H was claimed initially by John Fitzgibbon in 1918, but relinquished 2 months later on August 14. That same day, Harry M. Lutge took claim of 321.82 acres which included Fitzgibbon's parcel, but the contract was canceled in 1919. In 2004, a local historian revealed that the area was used as a trash dump by local residents until the establishment of an organized garbage system in the mid-1940s (Duran et al., 2010a:6-8).

CA-KER-6328H is not considered eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The site does not contribute to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage and is not considered eligible under Criterion 1. Archival research could not associate the site with persons important to our past, and the site is not considered eligible under Criterion 2. As a historical refuse scatter, the site does not represent a distinct or unique style, type, or design, and the site is not considered eligible under Criterion 3. Finally, a sample of the artifacts was recorded in the field and the data potential of the site has been exhausted. In addition, the site contains only the potential for subsurface deposits similar to those found on the surface, which would not contribute information important to homesteading and ranching patterns in the Indian Wells Valley in the early twentieth century. Therefore, due to a lack of association and impaired integrity, CA-KER-6328H does not contribute information important to history and is not eligible under Criterion 4.

Site CA-KER-7078H consists of a section of a nineteenth-century wagon trail. The trail crosses perpendicular to the current Project area. Only the segment of the wagon trail that crosses the Proposed Project ADI was reviewed as part of the current effort. The trail is in very poor condition and has been partially disturbed by modern use as a dirt road. The site is also bisected by two-track roads and utility lines. A single artifact was noted in proximity to the wagon trail (one hole-in-cap can). No other artifacts were noted in association with site CA-KER-7078H (Duran et al., 2010a and b). The site is located on Kern County and privately owned land within the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Site CA-SBR-11479H consists of three concrete foundation slabs. The site is partially located on BLM land; the remaining portion of the site is located on CLNAWS land. Fragments of asphalt were noted that appear to be from two roads. One of the roads runs parallel to the CLNAWS fence line; the second road runs perpendicular to the fence line, coming off Highway 178 at a right angle, and stretching out to the westernmost foundation on the CLNAWS side of the fence. Between the telephone lines and Highway 178, there are four metal posts set in concrete. The posts are in sets of two about a foot apart on either side of the asphalt road running from the highway to the foundation. Segments of 4-inch-diameter

metal pipe are visible three feet south of these posts, and appear to be parts of a solid pipe running under the asphalt feature. East of the metal posts is a small mid-twentieth-century refuse scatter containing diagnostic cans and bottles/jars. Pieces of barbed wire and milled lumber nailed together with wire nails were also present. The overall site remains in fair condition with no recent disturbances apparent. The proximity to the CLNAWS perimeter fence most likely deters any exploration of the area (Duran et al., 2010a and b). The extreme southeast boundary of the site is located within the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Native American Consultation

Consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was initiated on May 3, 2010, requesting a search of its Sacred Lands File (SLF) for private lands within the Proposed Project ADI. The BLM maintains responsibility for Native American consultation regarding BLM land within the area of the Proposed Project. The NAHC responded, stating that no Native American cultural resources are present within a 0.5-mile radius of the private parcels within the Proposed Project ADI; the NAHC requested that Native American individuals and organizations be contacted to elicit information and/or concerns regarding cultural resource issues related to the Proposed Project. Correspondence was initiated by SCE on May 7, 2010 with the Tule River Indian Tribe, the Kawaiisu Tribe of Tejon Reservation, Mr. Ron Wermuth, Kitanemuk & Youlumne Tejon Indians, the Kern Valley Indian Council, the Tejon Indian Tribe, and the Tubatulabals of Kern Valley. The Proposed Project was briefly described and participation in the project review process was encouraged, to enhance preservation of sacred lands or resources that might be present within the Proposed Project ADI. No responses were received. Copies of the letters are included in Appendix I of the Proponent's Environmental Assessment (SCE, 2010).

Archaeological Survey

An archaeological survey of the Proposed Project ADI was conducted from May 12, 2010 through May 20, 2010 by employees of Epsilon Systems Solutions, Inc (Epsilon Systems), the Applicant's consultant. The Proposed Project ADI, along with a 30-meter buffer on each side of the subtransmission and fiber optic telecommunication cable route, was surveyed. Survey transects were conducted at 15-meter intervals with two transects on each side of the proposed fiber optic telecommunication cable line route. Epsilon Systems personnel recorded a total of nine newly identified historic-era sites and 19 isolated finds during the field survey. No newly identified prehistoric sites or isolates were identified. In addition, forms for three previously recorded archaeological sites were updated. Isolated finds are described in Table B.3.5-2. Isolated artifacts are not considered to be historical resources or unique archaeological resources for the purposes of CEQA. Detailed descriptions of the previously unrecorded cultural resources within the Proposed Project ADI are provided below. All of the newly discovered cultural resources were evaluated for CRHR eligibility during the current study. Table B.3.5-3 lists both newly discovered and updated cultural resources within the Proposed Project ADI, associated Project activities, and their CRHR eligibility.

Site CA-SBR-13777H is a refuse scatter that consists of cans, glass, ceramics, chicken wire, bailing wire, barrel hoops, and milled lumber. The site is located on BLM lands and sits approximately 60 meters south of State Highway 178, and the BLM Burro Facility was noted to the east. The site is in good condition with no apparent disturbances in the immediate vicinity, thus indicating that the artifacts are likely in their original context. The site is located south of the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Table B.3.5-2. Newly Recorded Isolated Finds

Isolate Number	Description
36-021451	glass fragments from 1 or 2 bottles
36-021452	"no deposit" 7-Up bottle
36-021453	10 amethyst bottle body fragments and 3 fragments of a brown bottle base
36-021454	20 ceramic sherds likely from the same vessel
36-021455	100 colorless, brown, and green glass fragments, all likely from 3 bottles
36-021456	bailing wire and oxidized metal fragments
36-021457	glass fragments and oxidized metal fragments
36-021458	3 brown glass shards from 1 bottle
36-021459	5 churchkey-opened tin cans and 1 hinged mint tin
36-021460	3 condensed milk cans
36-021461	1 oil can, 1 churchkey-opened beer can, and 1 "Norway" sardine can
36-021462	1 condensed milk can
36-021463	12 churchkey-opened beer cans
36-021464	4 crimped-seam pull-tab beer cans
36-021465	10 shards of aqua, brown, light brown, and amber glass bottle fragments
36-021466	7 cone-top beer cans
36-021467	5 flat-top beverage cans
36-021468	10 flat-top beer cans
36-021469	9 bi-metal pull-tab beer cans

Source: Duran et al., 2010a.

Table B.3.5-3. Cultural Resources within the Proposed Project Area of Direct Impact

Site Number	Site Description	Area of Direct Impact	Proposed Project Activity	Eligible for CRHR
CA-SBR-13777H	refuse scatter	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No*
CA-SBR-13778H	refuse scatter	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No*
CA-SBR-13779H	multi-episode refuse dump	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No
CA-SBR-13780H	refuse scatter	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No
CA-SBR-13781H	3 concrete foundations and an associated refuse scatter	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No
CA-KER-7738H / CA-SBR-13799H	Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line	Yes	Replacement of 6 wood poles	No*
CA-KER-7739H / CA-SBR-13800H	Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line	Yes	Installation of Fault Return Conductor, 2 LWS poles, and 5 TSP poles; removal of 1 wood pole; modification of 3 wood poles	No*

Table B.3.5-3. Cultural Resources within the Proposed Project Area of Direct Impact

Site Number	Site Description	Area of Direct Impact	Proposed Project Activity	Eligible for CRHR
36-012450	Searles electrical substation	Yes	Installation of protective relays and telecommunication equipment devices	No
15-013796	Inyokern electrical substation	Yes	Installation of protective relays and telecommunication equipment devices	No
CA-KER-6328H	multi-episode refuse dump	Yes	Downs Substation Expansion	No
CA-KER-7078H	nineteenth-century wagon trail	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No
CA-SBR-11479H	3 concrete foundation slabs	No	Installation of fiber optic cable on existing overhead structures	No*

* Portions of these sites are located on BLM land; National Register eligibility determinations have not been made for these resources.

Site CA-SBR-13778H consists of historic refuse that may have been a part of a dwelling. The site sits atop a small rise overlooking a row of houses in South Trona. The site is 200 meters west of State Highway 178 across from the North American Chemical Corporation factory and is located on BLM land. Artifacts noted at the site include cans, glass, ceramics, milled wood fragments, seat and bed springs, flex pipe, a stove pipe, bailing wire, chicken wire, round-head nails, concrete fragments, toilet bowl fragments, and terra cotta fragments that may have originated from a utilitarian clay pipe. The overall site is in poor condition. Several two-track dirt roads used by off-highway-vehicles (OHV) were noted immediately outside the site boundary. The site is located west of the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Site CA-SBR-13779H is an extensive multi-episode refuse dump. The refuse deposit extends west beyond the Project area and is located on private land. The site appears to have been utilized from the 1920s through the 1970s. Some refuse noted at the site include cans, glass, milled wood, ceramics, and miscellaneous materials. The limits of this refuse dump are incompletely defined because of the large area that the site encompasses. The main section of the dump area appears to be west of the recorded area. Currently, the site is in poor condition. A 2-foot-tall berm was noted on the eastern boundary of the site. The berm may have been the result of activities related to the construction of a power line and access road located east of the berm. Very little refuse was noted east of the berm, suggesting that the berm was created after the dump site and that many of the artifacts are in a secondary context. The site is located west of the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Site CA-SBR-13780H is a single-episode refuse scatter. Historic-era materials include cans, glass shards, ceramic sherds, wire nails, and metal fragments. The site is in poor condition. Granite boulder push-piles around the site most likely reflect road construction from Highway 178. The granite push-piles appear to have interfered with the original limits of the site boundary because some artifacts were noted in proximity to the push-piles and are likely in a secondary context. The site is located on private land east of the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Site CA-SBR-13781H consists of four concrete slabs representing three foundations and an associated refuse scatter and is located on private land. Bricks with maker's marks from the 1920s indicate that the foundations were built in the 1920s. Artifacts include cans, glass, automotive parts, milled lumber, bricks, and other debris. Refuse appears to date from the historic, sub-modern, and modern era. The majority of the refuse scatter is east of the foundations. Overall, the site is in poor condition. Recent

activities have affected the site, including a frequently used two-track dirt road that runs along the western boundary of the site. A parking area was noted through the southwestern boundary of the site. The western boundary of the site is located within the existing Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line corridor.

Site CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H is the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line. This linear feature is approximately 35 miles long and composed of H-frame and T-frame utility poles with three high-voltage lines and two lower-voltage conductors. H-frame utility poles were noted between the Inyokern and Searles Substations. From the Searles Substation to the McGen Substation T-frame utility poles were noted. The high-voltage lines are suspended under the main crossbar of the utility pole. Insulators for the high-voltage lines consist of six ceramic disks. Both uprights of the utility pole are creosoted and have a basal diameter of 16 inches. An identification tag of "137004-S" was noted on one of the poles. Several nails with numbers stamped on the head were also noted. It is unclear what the stamped nails represent. The utility poles for this line are spaced approximately 650 feet apart, and each pole is approximately 21 feet tall. Some date stamps were noted on poles ranging from the 1950s to the 2000s. According to SCE, the majority of the H-frame utility poles have one pole dated 1953 or 1955 and the other pole dating 1963. Many of the poles near the City of Trona were replaced in 1989. Other dates noted for the poles included 1996, 2004, and 2009. Site CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H traverses lands owned by the BLM, CLNAWS, Kern County, San Bernardino County, and private land.

The Proposed Project would replace approximately six existing wood poles with new wood poles to support fiber optic telecommunication cable installation along CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H. The Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line was constructed in the 1950s (Duran et al., 2010a:5-3). While this construction was important to the residents in the Inyokern/Ridgecrest/Trona area and provided them with reliable services, the installation of subtransmission lines occurred throughout the region in similar contexts. Today the subtransmission lines are ubiquitous and represent a standardized method of conveying energy to residential consumers. The subtransmission lines, in and of themselves, do not represent significant events or broad patterns in California's history and cultural heritage, nor are they associated with any persons important to the past (Criterion 1 and 2). The design and construction materials of the subtransmission lines were standardized and they do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3). The recent design and construction (within the last 60 years) of CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H is well documented, and its function is understood, thus possessing little to no potential to yield important historical data (Criterion 4). Therefore, CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H is ineligible for inclusion in the CRHR under all four criteria (1–4).

Site CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H is the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line. This linear feature is approximately 40 miles long and composed of T-frame utility poles with two crossbars. The observed pole and neighboring pole lean slightly to the east. The upright is creosoted and has a basal diameter of 13 inches. The line has a total of six conductors. Both cross-members are braced with steel braces attached on the south side of the pole. The spacing between poles is approximately 280 feet. The observed pole has an identification tag numbered "89607" and a date nail marked "45." Some date stamps were noted on poles ranging from the 1960s to the 2000s. According to SCE, the majority of the poles for CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H were placed in 1965 with the majority of poles near the City of Trona being replaced between 1975 and 1985. Some poles throughout the line were replaced in 1996. Site CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H traverses lands owned by the BLM, CLNAWS, Kern County, San Bernardino County, and private land.

Proposed work along CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H includes installation of a Fault Return Conductor, two Light Weight Steel (LWS) poles and five Tubular Steel Pole (TSP) poles; removal of one wood pole; and modification of three wood poles. The Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 2 115-kV subtransmission line was constructed in the 1960s (Duran et al., 2010a:5-4). While this construction was important to the residents in the Inyokern/Ridgecrest/Trona area and provided them with reliable services, the installation of subtransmission lines occurred throughout the region in similar contexts. Today the subtransmission lines are ubiquitous and represent a standardized method of conveying energy to residential consumers. The subtransmission lines, in and of themselves, do not represent significant events or broad patterns in California's history and cultural heritage, nor are they associated with any persons important to the past (Criterion 1 and 2). The design and construction materials of the subtransmission lines were standardized and they do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3). The recent design and construction (within the last 50 years) of CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H is well documented, and its function is understood, thus possessing little to no potential to yield important historical data (Criterion 4). Therefore, CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H is ineligible for inclusion in the CRHR under all four criteria (1–4).

Site 36-021450 is the Searles electrical substation. The substation contains common components of an electrical substation, including oil circuit breakers, transformers, voltage regulators, and a control house. The substation is currently in use, and routine maintenance of the substation has likely upgraded/ replaced various components in the last 60 years. The Searles electrical substation is located on privately owned land.

Proposed work at the Searles Substation includes the installation of protective relays and telecommunication equipment devices. According to SCE, the substation was constructed in the 1950s (Duran et al., 2010a:5-4). While this construction was important to the residents of Trona and provided them with reliable services, the installation of electrical substations occurred throughout the region in similar contexts. Today electrical substations are ubiquitous and represent a standardized method of transmitting energy to residential consumers. The Searles Substation, in and of itself, does not represent a significant event or broad pattern in California's history and cultural heritage, nor is it associated with any persons important to the past (Criterion 1 and 2). The design and construction materials of the Searles Substation was standardized and they do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3). The recent design and construction (within the last 60 years) of 36-021450 is well documented, and its function is understood, thus possessing little to no potential to yield important historical data (Criterion 4). Therefore, 36-021450 is ineligible for inclusion in the CRHR under all four criteria (1–4).

Site 15-013796 is the Inyokern electrical substation. The Inyokern Substation contains typical components of an electrical substation, including oil circuit breakers, transformers, voltage regulators, and a control house. The substation also contains wood components, which according to SCE, are no longer common with newly constructed substations. The substation is currently in use, and routine maintenance of the substation has likely upgraded/replaced various components in the last 60 years. The Inyokern Substation is located on privately owned land.

Proposed work at the Inyokern Substation includes the installation of protective relays and telecommunication equipment devices. According to SCE, the substation was constructed in the 1950s (Duran et al., 2010a:5-4). While this construction was important to the residents of Inyokern and provided them with reliable services, the installation of electrical substations occurred throughout the

region in similar contexts. Today electrical substations are ubiquitous and represent a standardized method of transmitting energy to residential consumers. The Inyokern Substation, in and of itself, does not represent a significant event or broad pattern in California's history and cultural heritage, nor is it associated with any persons important to the past (Criterion 1 and 2). The design and construction materials of the Inyokern substation was standardized and they do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3). The recent design and construction (within the last 60 years) of 15-013796 is well documented, and its function is understood, thus possessing little to no potential to yield important historical data (Criterion 4). Therefore, 15-013796 is ineligible for inclusion in the CRHR under all four criteria (1–4).

B.3.5.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Applicant Proposed Measures

SCE has committed to the following measure to reduce Project impacts to cultural resources. This Applicant Proposed Measure (APM), shown in Table B.3.5-4, was outlined in the PEA (SCE, 2010). In the following disclosure and analysis of the Project's potential to impact cultural and paleontological resources, it is assumed that APMs would be implemented as elements of Project development, planning, and construction. This APM is incorporated into additional more specific mitigation measures that would be implemented to ensure that all impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Table B.3.5-4. Applicant Proposed Measures – Cultural Resources

APM	Description
APM CR-1	An archaeologist would monitor the grubbing, pad preparation and construction earthwork to ensure that no significant buried deposit is inadvertently encountered during construction activity at the location of the Downs Substation expansion. SCE would develop an archaeological monitoring plan describing archaeological monitoring activities and treatment of any unanticipated discoveries, as warranted.

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource as defined in §15064.5 [§15064.5 generally defines* historical resource *under CEQA]?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. As shown in Table B.3.5-3 there are 12 cultural resources within the Proposed Project area. None of these resources are eligible for listing on the CRHR or considered to be an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. Numerous isolates were also identified within the Proposed Project area, but because isolates are not considered to be significant cultural resources, Project-related impacts on these artifacts would be less than significant. Seven (7) resources (CA-KER-7078H, CA-SBR-11479H, -13777H, -13778H, -13779H, -13780H, and -13781H) are located within the subtransmission line and fiber optic telecommunication corridor and would not be impacted by the Proposed Project. Construction associated with the installation of the overhead portion of the subtransmission line (including the relocation/replacement of existing poles and modifications to existing substations) is considered to pose a low risk of disturbance to any known or unanticipated resources in the area. Ground disturbance would be confined to specific areas that have been previously disturbed or areas considered to have a decreased likelihood for containing buried cultural materials. Five (5) cultural resources (CA-KER-6328H, CA-KER-7738H/CA-SBR-13799H, CA-KER-7739H/CA-SBR-13800H, 36-012450, and 15-013796) are located within the Proposed Project ADI and would be directly impacted by the Proposed Project. While all five (5) of these resources are ineligible for listing on the CRHR, SCE has committed to APM CR-1, in which an archaeological monitor would be present during construction activity at the location of the Downs Substation expansion. Mitigation

Measure C-1 (Archaeological construction monitoring) provides more detail on how this activity would be implemented and would ensure that impacts are reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure for Previously-Unidentified Archaeological Resources

C-1 **Archaeological construction monitoring.** Archaeological monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified archaeologist during any ground disturbing activities related to the expansion of the Downs Substation to address any unanticipated subsurface deposits that may be associated with the site. Unless features or artifacts substantially different than those already documented within the CA-KER-6328H are found, no further management of this resource is required.

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. There are no significant archaeological resources within the Proposed Project area. However, unknown and potentially significant buried resources could be inadvertently unearthed during ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction. To minimize the effects of this potential impact, Mitigation Measure C-2 (Treatment of previously unidentified cultural resources) is recommended. If previously unidentified archaeological resources are unearthed during construction activities, construction would be halted in the immediate area of the find and directed away from the discovery until a qualified archaeologist assesses the significance of the resource. The archaeologist would recommend appropriate measures to record, preserve, or recover the resources. Mitigation Measure C-2 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level because any previously unrecorded or unknown archaeological resource discovered during the course of construction would be subsequently avoided or provided proper treatment.

Mitigation Measure for Cultural Resources

C-2 **Treatment of previously unidentified cultural resources.** If previously unidentified cultural resources are unearthed during construction activities, construction work in the immediate area of the find shall be halted and directed away from the discovery until a qualified archaeologist assesses the significance of the resource. If the discovery is located on BLM land, the Ridgecrest field office shall be contacted to evaluate the resource and make necessary plans for treatment. If the resource is located on private land, SCE, in consultation with the CPUC, shall make the necessary plans for treatment of the find(s) and for the evaluation and mitigation of impacts if the finds are found to be historically significant according to CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (a)).

c. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Several fossil-bearing geologic formations are located in the Project area, as discussed in Section B.3.5.1, above. The most useful designation for paleontological resources in an environmental document is the "sensitivity" of a particular geologic unit. Sensitivity refers to the likelihood of finding significant fossils within a geologic unit. The following levels of sensitivity recognize the important relationship between fossils and the geologic formations within which they are preserved. In the Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system (BLM, 2007) geologic units are classified based on the relative abundance of vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils and their sensitivity to adverse impacts, with a higher class number

indicating a higher potential. The basic categories of classification for the PFYC system are summarized below:

- **Class 1 – Very Low.** Geologic units that are not likely to contain recognizable fossil remains, includes units that are igneous or metamorphic, excluding reworked volcanic ash units and units that are Precambrian in age or older.
- **Class 2 – Low.** Sedimentary geologic units that are not likely to contain vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils. Geologic units under this classification usually include those that are generally younger than 10,000 years before present (bp), recent aeolian deposits, or sediments that have undergone significant physical or chemical changes (i.e., diagenetic alteration).
- **Class 3 – Moderate or Unknown.** Fossiliferous sedimentary geologic units where fossil content varies in significance, abundance, and predictable occurrence; or sedimentary units of unknown fossil potential. *Moderate Potential* units are often marine in origin with sporadic known occurrences of vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils known to occur intermittently. *Unknown Potential* units exhibit geologic characteristics that suggest significant fossils could be present, but are poorly studied and/or poorly documented and little information about the paleontological resources of the unit or the area is known.
- **Class 4 – High.** Geologic units containing a high occurrence of significant fossils. Vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils are known to occur and have been documented, but may vary in occurrence and predictability.
- **Class 5 – Very High.** Highly fossiliferous geologic units that consistently and predictably produce vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils, and are at risk of human-caused adverse impacts or natural degradation.

Based on the above criteria Cogstone assigned sensitivity ratings to the geologic units underlying the Project as follows: Recent alluvium – Low sensitivity (Class 2), Pleistocene alluvium – Moderate sensitivity (Class 3), Pleistocene lake deposits – High sensitivity (Class 4), and Mesozoic granitics – Very Low sensitivity (Class 1). The Project components in the Searles Valley area with anticipated ground disturbing activities, trenches for conduits at the McGen and Searles Substations and excavations for the six poles to be replaced along the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115-kV subtransmission line, are located in an area where Recent alluvium is likely shallowly underlain by High sensitivity Pleistocene lake deposits. Due to the close proximity of the High sensitivity lake deposits in the Searles Valley and the likelihood that the alluvium shallowly overlies the lake deposits, there is a potential that fossils in the Highly sensitive Pleistocene lake deposits could be impacted by drilling/excavation activities in the Searles Valley area. Alternatively, excavation activities for Project components within the Indian Wells Valley would be located in developed areas underlain by Recent alluvium, where the alluvium is likely to be disturbed near the surface and of sufficient depth that excavation would not impact underlying units of higher paleontologic sensitivity, and thus would not have the potential to damage or destroy fossils in these areas.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure C-3 (Protect paleontologic resources) provided below would minimize the potential for damage to paleontological resources in the Searles Valley area from ground disturbing construction activities such that impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure for Paleontological Resources

C-3 **Protect paleontologic resources.** Prior to construction, a Paleontologic Resource Specialist consisting of a certified paleontologist shall be retained by the Applicant to supervise monitoring of construction excavations and to produce a Paleontological Resource Management Plan (PRMP) for those portions of the Project in the Searles Valley area where ground disturbing activities will occur.

The Paleontologic Resource Specialist would obtain a qualified paleontological construction monitor to monitor ground disturbance activities for the portions of the Project located in the Searles Valley area. Paleontological monitoring would include inspection of exposed rock units and microscopic examination of matrix to determine if fossils are present. The monitor would have authority to temporarily divert grading away from exposed fossils in order to recover the fossil specimens.

The PRMP shall address and implement the following measures:

- **Environmental Training.** Training shall be provided to construction supervisors and crew with environmental awareness training regarding the protection of paleontological resources and procedures to be implemented in the event fossil remains are encountered by ground-disturbing activities.
- **Construction Monitoring.** Ground-disturbing activities, including all construction-related grading, excavation, and trenching in areas where potential fossil-bearing materials may be encountered, shall be monitored on a full-time basis by the paleontological construction monitor only in those parts of the Project area where these activities will disturb previously undisturbed strata in rock units of paleontologic sensitivity. Areas of grading and excavation in Recent alluvium in the Searles Valley shall be checked on a full-time basis to verify if older high sensitivity lake sediments are penetrated.
- **Recovery and Testing.** If fossils are encountered during construction, construction activities shall be temporarily diverted from the discovery and the paleontological construction monitor would notify all concerned parties and collect matrix for testing and processing as directed by the Project Paleontologic Resource Specialist. Construction would resume at the discovery location once all the necessary matrix was stockpiled, as determined by the paleontological construction monitor.
- **Prepare Monthly Progress Reports.** The Project Paleontologic Resource Specialist shall document interim results of the construction monitoring program with monthly progress reports. In addition, at each fossil locality field data forms shall be completed recording the locality, stratigraphic columns shall be measured, and appropriate scientific samples submitted for analysis.
- **Analysis and Prepare Final Paleontological Resource Recovery Report.** The Project Paleontologic Resource Specialist shall direct identification, laboratory processing, cataloguing, analysis, and documentation of the fossil collections. When appropriate, and in consultation with the Applicant, splits of rock or sediment samples shall be submitted to commercial laboratories for microfossil, pollen, or radiometric dating analysis. After analysis, the collections would be prepared for curation (see below). A final technical report would be prepared to summarize construction monitoring and present the results of the fossil recovery program. The report would be prepared in accordance with Applicant, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines, and CPUC requirements. The

final report would be submitted to the Applicant, the CPUC, and the curation repository (see below).

- **Curation.** Prior to construction, the Applicant shall enter into a formal agreement with a recognized museum repository. The Applicant would submit for curation to the approved repository any fossil collections obtained due to Project construction, all appropriate field and laboratory documentation, and the final Paleontological Resource Recovery Report in a timely manner following construction.

d. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. No human remains are known to be located within the Proposed Project area. However, there is always the possibility that unmarked burials may be unearthed during construction. In the unlikely event of an accidental discovery of any human remains, Mitigation Measure C-3 (Treatment of human remains) would be implemented and work within the immediate area of the discovery shall be halted and directed away from the discovery. Health and Safety Code Section7050.5, CEQA Section 15064.5(e), and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the unlikely event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery. Mitigation Measure C-4 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure for Human Remains

C-4 **Treatment of human remains.** If human remains are unearthed during construction activities, construction work in the immediate area of the discovery shall be halted and directed away from the discovery until the county coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If they are those of a Native American, the following would apply:

a. The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission.

b. If discovered human remains are determined to be Native American remains, and are released by the coroner, these remains shall be left in situ and covered by fabric or other temporary barriers.

c. The human remains shall be protected until SCE, the landowner, and the Native American Heritage Commission come to a decision on the final disposition of the remains.

According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100), and willful disturbance of human remains is a felony (Section 7052).