

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
WEST OF DEVERS UPGRADE PROJECT**

**WILDLIFE NOISE MONITORING PLAN
FINAL**

PREPARED FOR:

Southern California Edison
Environmental Services
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue, GO-1
Rosemead, CA 91770

PREPARED BY:

JACOBS®

June 2017, Revised May 2019

Wildlife Noise Monitoring Checklist

Applicable Agencies:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Indian Affairs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coachella Valley Conservation Commission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Morongo Band of Mission Indians |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Department of Fish and Wildlife | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Public Utilities Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |

Applies in the Following Areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLM Lands | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CV-MSHCP |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morongo Reservation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WR-MSHCP |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> San Bernardino County | |

Applies to the Following Project Components:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transmission Line | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subtransmission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telecom |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distribution | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Construction Yards | | |

Addresses the Following Measures:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2c | Conduct Surveys and avoidance for threatened and endangered riparian birds |
| FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2e | Conduct surveys and avoidance for coastal California gnatcatcher |

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CAGN	Coastal California Gnatcatcher
CAISO	California Independent System Operator
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFGC	California Fish and Game Code
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CV	Coachella Valley
dBa	decibel(s) (A-weighted scale)
FEIR	Final Environmental Impact Report
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973
FRED	Field Reporting Environmental Database
ITP	Incidental Take Permit
kV	kilovolt(s)
Leq	equivalent sound level
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MM	mitigation measure
Morongo Reservation	Reservation Trust Lands of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians
MSHCP	Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
Plan	Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan
Project	West of Devers Upgrade Project
ROW	right-of-way
SCE	Southern California Edison
SR	State Route
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WOD	West of Devers
WR	Western Riverside

INTRODUCTION

Southern California Edison (SCE) proposes to construct the West of Devers (WOD) Upgrade Project (Project) to increase the power transfer capability of the WOD 220-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines between Devers, El Casco, Vista, and San Bernardino Substations. The Project is needed to facilitate the full deliverability¹ of new electric generation resources being developed in eastern Riverside County, in an area designated by the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) for planning purposes as the Blythe and Desert Center areas. The Project, planned to be operational by 2021, would upgrade the WOD transmission line system by replacing the existing 220-kV transmission lines and associated structures with higher-capacity transmission lines and structures and making telecommunication improvements.

The purpose of this Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan (Plan) is to comply with mitigation measures (MMs) outlined in the Final Environmental Impact Report² (FEIR) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (Bureau of Land Management [BLM], 2016a) as presented in the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (California Public Utilities Commission [CPUC], 2016b) and Record of Decision (BLM, 2016b), respectively. The Plan describes methods for monitoring and managing construction noise impacts on state and federally listed avian species with potential to breed in the vicinity of Project construction. The Plan is intended to supplement the Nesting Bird Management Plan for the Project.

1.1 PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Plan is to outline the methods for managing and monitoring construction noise levels to reduce indirect impacts on threatened and/or endangered birds when impacts are unavoidable. Because some mitigation actions fall under the jurisdiction of other Project resource management plans, this Plan will refer to other plans when appropriate.

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The existing 220-kV system consists of two 220-kV circuits connecting Devers and Vista Substations, one circuit connecting Devers Substation with the San Bernardino Substation, one circuit connecting Devers Substation with El Casco Substation, and one circuit connecting El Casco Substation with San Bernardino Substation. The transmission lines currently are supported on a combination of double-circuit and single-circuit structures. The Project would increase the system transfer capacity from approximately 1,600 megawatts to 4,800 megawatts.

¹ The terms “full deliverability” or “full capacity deliverability status” describe the condition whereby a large generating facility is interconnected with the electrical grid to allow the full delivery of electricity requested. CAISO Tariff, Appendix A, at footnote 2, <http://www.aiso.com/2476/2476bc8114130.pdf>.

² For the purpose of this Plan, “FEIR” refers to the FEIR (California Public Utilities Commission, 2015) and Addendum to the FEIR (CPUC, 2016a).

The Project would upgrade the existing WOD system by replacing existing 220-kV transmission lines and associated structures with new, higher-capacity 220-kV transmission lines and structures; modifying existing substation facilities; removing and relocating existing subtransmission (66-kV) lines; removing and relocating existing distribution (12-kV) lines; and making various telecommunication improvements. In particular, the Project would:

- Upgrade substation equipment within SCE’s existing Devers, El Casco, Etiwanda, San Bernardino, and Vista Substations in order to accommodate continuous and emergency power on the upgraded WOD 220-kV transmission lines. Activities related to substation upgrades will take place within the existing, disturbed fence lines of the substations and are not addressed further in this Plan.
- Remove and upgrade the existing 220-kV transmission lines and structures primarily within the existing WOD corridor as follows:
 - Segment 1 would be approximately 3.5 miles long and extend south from San Bernardino Substation to the San Bernardino Junction. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-San Bernardino, Etiwanda-San Bernardino, San Bernardino-Vista, and El Casco-San Bernardino.
 - Segment 2 would be approximately 5 miles long and extend west from the San Bernardino Junction to Vista Substation. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-Vista No. 1 and Devers-Vista No. 2. Segment 3 would be approximately 10 miles long and extend east from the San Bernardino Junction to El Casco Substation. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-Vista No. 1, Devers-Vista No. 2, El Casco-San Bernardino, and Devers-San Bernardino.
 - Segment 4 would be approximately 12 miles long and extend east from the El Casco Substation to San Gorgonio Avenue in the City of Banning. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-Vista No. 1, Devers-Vista No. 2, Devers-El Casco, and Devers-San Bernardino.
 - Segment 5 would be approximately 9 miles long and extend east from San Gorgonio Avenue in the City of Banning to the eastern limit of the Reservation Trust Lands of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians (Morongo Reservation) at Rushmore Avenue. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-Vista No. 1, Devers-Vista No. 2, Devers-El Casco, and Devers-San Bernardino.
 - Segment 6 would be approximately 8 miles long and extend east from the eastern boundary of the Morongo Reservation to Devers Substation. It would include the following existing 220-kV transmission lines: Devers-Vista No. 1, Devers-Vista No. 2, Devers-El Casco, and Devers-San Bernardino.
- Remove a portion (approximately 2 miles) of the existing San Bernardino-Redlands-Timoteo and San Bernardino-Redlands-Tennessee 66-kV Subtransmission Lines from within the existing WOD right-of-way (ROW) and reconstruct as follows:
 - The relocated San Bernardino-Redlands-Timoteo 66-kV Subtransmission Line would be approximately 2 miles long and would reconnect to the San Bernardino-Redlands-Timoteo 66-kV Subtransmission Line inside Timoteo Substation.
 - The relocated San Bernardino-Redlands-Tennessee 66-kV Subtransmission Line would be approximately 3.5 miles long and would reconnect to the San Bernardino-Redlands-Tennessee 66-kV Subtransmission Line at Barton Road.

- Remove a portion of the existing Dental and Intern 12-kV distribution circuits within the WOD ROW and relocate the circuits as follows:
 - The relocated Dental 12-kV distribution circuit would be approximately 1.5 miles long and would reconnect to the existing Dental 12-kV circuit.
 - The relocated Intern 12-kV distribution circuit would be approximately 2.25 miles long and would reconnect to the Intern 12-kV circuit.
- Install telecommunication lines and equipment for the protection, monitoring, and control of transmission lines and substation equipment.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION

The Project crosses the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Colton, Grand Terrace, Loma Linda, Palm Springs, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, San Bernardino, and Yucaipa, and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The transmission corridor passes over Interstate 215 in San Bernardino County, as well as State Route (SR)-60, SR-79, SR-243, and SR-62 in Riverside County, and runs approximately parallel to Interstate 10 for the majority of the corridor in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

The Project is located largely within an existing utility corridor in incorporated and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, within the San Bernardino Valley. The San Bernardino Valley region is bounded by the San Gabriel Mountains and San Bernardino Mountains to the north, by the San Jacinto Mountains to the east, and by the Santa Ana Mountains and Pomona Valley to the south and west. The terrain of the project area varies between gently sloping plains to steep ridges and drainages in the foothills. Elevations within the project area range from approximately 1,050 to 3,000 feet above mean sea level with mountainous topography, lowlands and foothills, and relatively flat urban areas.

The Project, which is divided into six segments, traverses areas of various land uses and is subject to several federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Segment 1, Segment 2, and the western portion of Segment 3 are located in incorporated and unincorporated portions of San Bernardino County. The eastern portion of Segment 3, all of Segment 4, and very small areas of Segment 5 are located in the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WR-MSHCP). Portions of Segment 5, excluding lands held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the Morongo Reservation, and most of Segment 6, excluding small parcels of lands administrated by BLM, are located in the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CV-MSHCP).

Figure 1 (at the end of this report) shows an overview of the Project and Study Area.

1.4 RELEVANT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

There are a number of federal and state regulations that afford varying degrees of protection for wildlife occurring within the project area. The regulations and permits applicable to the Plan are summarized in this section. The federal and state regulations, along with the Project-specific requirements (FEIR/FEIS MMs), provide the regulatory framework within which the Project must comply.

1.4.1 Federal Laws and Regulations

1.4.1.1 *National Environmental Policy Act*

BLM prepared the FEIS (2016) in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 *United States Code* Sections 4321 to 4370d (as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations), 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 1500 to 1508, and BLM's NEPA handbook (2008). MMs to be implemented during the Project for the protection of environmental resources were presented in the FEIS.

1.4.1.2 *Federal Endangered Species Act*

The Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (FESA), as amended (16 *United States Code* 1531 et seq.), provides guidance for the conservation of endangered and threatened species, and the ecosystems upon which they depend. FESA Section 9 lists activities that are prohibited by the act. For example, "take" of any listed species is prohibited. Take under FESA is defined as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) may issue permits for incidental take, which may be obtained either through Section 7 consultations, or through a Section 10(a) permit in conjunction with an approved Habitat Conservation Plan. Under provisions of Section 7(a)(2) of FESA, a federal agency that permits, licenses, funds, or otherwise authorizes a Project activity must consult with USFWS to ensure that its actions would not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated Critical Habitat.

BLM engaged USFWS in informal and formal consultation for the Project. USFWS (2016) issued a Biological Opinion (BO) for the Project in accordance with Section 7 of FESA in December 2016. The BO addresses listed riparian bird species³ and the Coastal California Gnatcatcher (CAGN) (*Pilioptila californica californica*).

1.4.1.3 *Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act*

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) makes it unlawful, except as formally permitted, to take (harass, harm, pursue, hunt, take, capture, or kill) migratory birds, except under permits for special situations such as imminent threat to human safety or scientific research. The law currently applies to more than 1,000 species, including most native birds, and covers the destruction or removal of active nests of those species.

³ For the Project, listed "riparian birds" are the Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*).

1.4.2 State and Local Laws and Regulations

1.4.2.1 *California Environmental Quality Act*

CPUC prepared the FEIR (2015) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines outlined in Title 14 *California Code of Regulations* Section 15000 et seq., as amended. MMs to be implemented during the Project for the protection of environmental resources were also presented in the FEIR.

1.4.2.2 *California Endangered Species Act*

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) is administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and prohibits the take of plant and animal species identified as either threatened or endangered in the State of California by the Fish and Game Commission (California Fish and Game Code [CFG] Sections 2050–2089). Under CESA, take means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, and does not include the harm or harassment provisions in the FESA definition. However, Sections 2081 and 2080.1 of CESA allow CDFW to authorize exceptions to the prohibition of take of the state-listed threatened or endangered plant and animal species for purposes such as public and private development based on a determination that the Project or action includes measures sufficient to “fully mitigate” impacts.

SCE has submitted a draft Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) application for the Project to CDFW. It is anticipated that the issued ITP will include requirements for listed riparian birds and CAGN.

1.4.2.3 *California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3505, 3513—Birds*

These sections of the CFGC protect all birds, birds of prey, and nongame birds, as well as their eggs and nests, for species that are not already listed as fully protected and that occur naturally within the state. Sections 3503 and 3503.5 of the CFGC stipulate the following regarding eggs and nests: Section 3503 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by CFGC or any regulation made pursuant thereto, and Section 3503.5 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders *Falconiformes* or *Strigiformes* (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by CFGC or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto. Section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory nongame bird, except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA.

1.4.3 Project-specific Requirements

This Plan was primarily prepared to address FEIR/FEIS MMs WIL-2c and WIL-2e. The MMs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Applicable Mitigation Measures*West of Devers Upgrade Project Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan*

Measure	Description
FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2c	<p>Conduct surveys and avoidance for threatened or endangered riparian birds. Construction activities shall avoid suitable habitat for listed riparian birds. If suitable habitat cannot be avoided, SCE shall consult with CDFW and USFWS and obtain appropriate take authorizations or permits. SCE shall implement the conservation measures contained within these permits.</p> <p>If construction activities will occur during the breeding season in potentially suitable habitat for listed riparian birds, a qualified biologist shall conduct protocol surveys of the project area and adjacent areas within 500 feet. USFWS protocol surveys shall be conducted for southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, and least Bell's vireo. The surveys shall be of adequate duration to verify potential nest sites if work is scheduled to occur during the breeding season. Where protocol surveys determine that listed riparian birds are present, SCE shall conduct additional focused nest location surveys, to determine the locations of nests and territories. Survey areas shall include a 500-foot buffer around project disturbance areas.</p> <p>Protocol surveys, shall be conducted within one year prior to the start of construction and shall continue annually during each nesting season until completion of construction and restoration activities. At a minimum, surveys shall be conducted from 15 May to 17 July for southwestern willow flycatcher, from 10 April to 31 July for least Bell's vireo, and from 1 June to 31 August for yellow-billed cuckoo.</p> <p>These surveys may be modified through coordination with the USFWS, CDFW, BLM, and the CPUC based on the condition of habitat, the observation of the species, or avoidance of riparian areas during the breeding season. SCE shall submit documentation providing results of the protocol surveys for listed riparian birds to the CPUC and BLM for review and approval in consultation with USFWS and CDFW.</p> <p>If an active breeding territory or nest is confirmed, the CPUC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW shall be notified immediately. All active nests shall be monitored on a weekly basis until the nestlings fledge or the nest becomes inactive. SCE shall provide monitoring reports to the CPUC and BLM for review in consultation with USFWS and CDFW.</p> <p>In coordination with the USFWS and CDFW, a 500-foot disturbance-free ground buffer and 1,000-foot vertical helicopter buffer shall be established around the active nest and demarcated by fencing or flagging. No construction or vehicle traffic shall occur within nest buffers, except on existing paved public roads.</p> <p>If an active breeding territory or nest is confirmed within 500 feet of any project activity site, SCE shall prepare and implement a Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan throughout construction and demolition activities taking place while listed riparian birds occupy the nesting territory. Sound levels at the nest sites shall not exceed 8 dBA above ambient levels or 70 dBA (hourly average Leq), whichever is greater. Ambient levels will be established prior to initiation of construction and demolition, using the same methodology that will be used to take noise measurements during monitoring.</p> <p>If the hourly average noise threshold is exceeded, or if the biological monitor determines that construction activities are disturbing nesting birds, additional noise reduction techniques shall be implemented to reduce project noise below the thresholds. Additional noise monitoring will be conducted to verify the reduction of noise levels below the thresholds. Noise reduction techniques can include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary noise barriers or sound walls • Noise pads or dampers • Replace and update noisy equipment • Moveable task noise barriers • Queue trucks to distribute idling noise • Locate vehicle access points and loading and shipping facilities away from the nest site

Table 1. Applicable Mitigation Measures*West of Devers Upgrade Project Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan*

Measure	Description
FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of noisy activities that occur simultaneously • Relocate noisy stationary equipment away from the nest sites <p>Implementation locations: This mitigation measure applies on BLM lands, throughout the WR-MSHCP and CV-MSHCP areas (regardless of SCE's PSE status), and within San Bernardino County, and is recommended on all Morongo Tribal Lands.</p> <p>Conduct surveys and avoidance for coastal California gnatcatcher. SCE shall conduct protocol-level surveys for coastal California gnatcatchers (CAGN) in all areas of coastal sage scrub habitat that may be affected by the Project. Survey areas will include a 500-foot buffer around project disturbance areas. Presence or absence of CAGN shall be determined prior to construction activities. In occupied CAGN habitat, SCE shall conduct additional focused nest location surveys to determine the locations of nests and territories. Survey areas shall include a 500-foot buffer around project disturbance areas.</p> <p>Surveys shall be conducted by qualified and permitted biologists. Surveys shall be of adequate duration to verify potential nest sites if work is scheduled to occur during the breeding season. Prior to construction, SCE shall submit documentation providing the results of the pre-construction focused surveys for CAGN to the CPUC and BLM for review and approval in consultation with USFWS and CDFW.</p> <p>Protocol or focused nest location surveys, as appropriate, shall be conducted within one year prior to the start of construction and shall continue annually until completion of construction and restoration activities.</p> <p>If an active breeding territory or nest is confirmed, the CPUC, BLM, USFWS, and CDFW shall be notified immediately and the observation will be included in the daily monitoring report. All active nests shall be monitored on a weekly basis until the nestlings fledge or the nest becomes inactive. SCE shall provide monitoring reports to the CPUC and BLM for review on a weekly basis.</p> <p>In coordination with the USFWS and CDFW, a 500-foot disturbance-free ground buffer and 1,000-foot vertical helicopter disturbance-free buffer shall be established around the active nest and demarcated by fencing or flagging. These buffers may be adjusted in consultation with USFWS and CDFW based on type of work activity performed. No construction or vehicle traffic shall occur within nest buffers, except on existing paved public roads.</p> <p>If an active breeding territory or nest is confirmed within 500 feet of any project activity site, the authorized nesting bird monitor shall monitor the nesting bird to evaluate impacts to the bird. If the construction, and associated noise, impacts nesting, in the opinion of the authorized nesting bird monitor, construction within 500 feet will immediately discontinue. If the authorized nesting bird monitor determines that construction may continue, SCE shall pre-prepare and implement a Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan throughout construction and demolition activities taking place while CAGN occupy the nesting territory. Sound levels at the nest sites shall not exceed 8 dBA above ambient levels or 70 dBA (hourly average Leq), whichever is greater. Ambient levels will be established prior to initiation of construction and demolition, using the same methodology that will be used to take noise measurements during monitoring.</p> <p>If the hourly average noise threshold is exceeded, or if the biological monitor determines that construction activities are disturbing nesting CAGN, additional noise reduction techniques shall be implemented to reduce project noise below the thresholds. Additional noise monitoring will be conducted to verify the reduction of noise levels below the thresholds. Noise reduction techniques can include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary noise barriers or sound walls • Using noise pads or dampers • Replacing and updating noisy equipment • Using moveable task noise barriers • Queuing trucks to distribute idling noise • Locating vehicle access points and loading and shipping facilities away from the nest site

Table 1. Applicable Mitigation Measures*West of Devers Upgrade Project Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan*

Measure	Description
FEIR/FEIS MM N-1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of noisy activities that occur simultaneously • Relocating noisy stationary equipment away from the nest sites <p>Construction activities shall avoid suitable habitat for CAGN, to the extent feasible. If suitable habitat cannot be avoided, SCE shall consult with CDFW and USFWS to obtain appropriate take authorization or permits. SCE shall implement the conservation measures contained within these permits.</p> <p>Implementation locations: This mitigation measure shall apply within San Bernardino County, throughout the WR-MSHCP lands (regardless of SCE’s PSE status), and is recommended within Morongo Tribal Lands. No suitable CAGN habitat is present in the CV-MSHCP portions of the ROW or on BLM land, so this mitigation measure shall not apply within those areas.</p> <p>Implement best management practices for construction noise. SCE shall employ the following noise-control techniques, at a minimum, to reduce construction noise exposure at noise-sensitive receptors and to avoid possible violations of local rules, standards, and ordinances during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction noise shall be confined to daytime, weekday hours (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) or an alternative schedule developed by SCE based on its coordination with the local jurisdiction. • Construction equipment shall use noise reduction features (e.g., mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than those originally installed by the manufacturer. • Stationary noise sources (e.g., generators, pumps) at staging areas and on the ROW within 1,400 feet of sensitive receptors shall be shielded at the source by an enclosure, temporary sound walls, or acoustic blankets. Where feasible, sound walls or acoustic blankets shall have a height of no less than 8 feet, a Sound Transmission Class (STC) of 27 or greater, and a surface with a solid face from top to bottom without any openings or cutouts. • Construction traffic and helicopter flight shall be routed away from residences and schools, where feasible. • Unnecessary construction vehicle use and idling time shall be minimized to the extent feasible, such that if a vehicle is not required for use immediately or continuously for safe construction activities, its engine should be shut off.

Notes:

To avoid redundancy, the FEIR/FEIS MM language was copied from the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPUC, 2016b). While subtle differences in MM language were noted upon review of the Record of Decision (BLM, 2016b), the requirements are ultimately the same. References for the citations in the requirement descriptions can be found in the source documents.

For the purpose of this Plan, “FEIR” refers to the FEIR (CPUC, 2015) and Addendum to the FEIR (CPUC, 2016a).

1.5 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The CPUC is the lead state agency responsible for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). BLM is the lead federal agency responsible for compliance with NEPA. The two lead agencies are responsible for CEQA and NEPA compliance, respectively, for the entire project. The lead agencies have discretionary approval over the Project and are responsible for reviewing this Plan.

Consulting agencies are public agencies, other than the lead agencies, that may provide guidance or information needed to satisfy the requirements of the measures contained in this Plan. Because this Plan addresses avoidance and minimization of potential impacts to state and federally listed wildlife species, the CDFW and USFWS are consulting agencies.

NOISE MONITORING, MINIMIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

When an active nest or territory for the listed riparian birds or CAGN is found, a 500-foot disturbance-free ground buffer and 1,000-foot vertical helicopter buffer will be established around nest sites in accordance with FEIR/FEIS MMs WIL-2c and WIL-2e, Conservation Measures 19, 22, and 25 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service BO (USFWS, 2016), and Take Minimization Measure 8.18 and 8.21 from the CFGC Section 2081 ITP (CDFW, 2018), and the terms and conditions of SCE's participation in the WR-MSHCP. Buffer reductions may be implemented by a Qualified Biologist with varying levels of coordination and/or approval by the CPUC, BLM, CDFW, and/or USFWS, depending on the location of the nest and, therefore, the applicability of the MMs and permits. This section describes construction noise monitoring methods and noise minimization and management strategies that will be employed when Project activities are authorized within 500 feet of a CAGN or listed riparian bird breeding or nesting territory determined to be noise-sensitive by a Qualified Biologist.⁴

2.1 NOISE MONITORING METHODS

If an active breeding territory or nest for a CAGN or threatened or endangered riparian bird is confirmed within 500 feet of any Project activity site and the appropriate authorizations to work within the buffer are obtained, SCE will implement the procedures described in this Plan throughout construction and demolition activities taking place while the listed birds occupy the nesting territory. Laydown yards, staging areas, access roads, and any other area subject to Project disturbance also will be required to adhere to the noise monitoring and minimization guidelines presented in this Plan.

Sound levels at the nest sites shall not exceed 8 decibels A-weighted scale (dBA)⁵ above ambient levels or 70 dBA (hourly average; equivalent sound level [Leq]),⁶ whichever is greater. All noise levels will be documented using the WOD Noise Data Sheet (Appendix A) and appended to reports submitted via SCE's Field Reporting Environmental Database (FRED). FRED reports will be submitted within 24 hours of the activity.

⁴ A Qualified Biologist is defined as a wildlife biologist who has been approved by the USFWS, CDFW, CPUC, and BLM to conduct protocol-level surveys and monitoring for CAGN. A Qualified Biologist for CAGN may possess a valid Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit for CAGN or be approved by the Service under the BO for the project. With respect to noise monitoring, the Qualified Biologist would have previous experience with noise monitoring activities for listed avian species. Additional roles and responsibilities related to breeding bird avoidance and minimization can be found in the Nesting Bird Management Plan.

⁵ A-weighted decibels, abbreviated dBA, are an expression of the relative loudness of sounds in air as perceived by the human ear.

⁶ The equivalent sound level, abbreviated Leq, is the preferred method to describe sound levels that vary over time, resulting in a single decibel value that takes into account the total sound over a designated period of time.

2.1.1 Baseline Noise Readings

Prior to starting or resuming construction activities within the 500-foot buffer, a Qualified Biologist experienced with noise monitoring will use a Project-approved noise meter to obtain a baseline reading that will establish ambient baseline noise levels not associated with the Project activities. A reading will be taken for 10 seconds every 10 minutes for each of three hour-long recording periods. The recording periods will be 09:00 to 10:00, 12:00 to 13:00, and 16:00 to 17:00 to obtain a sampling of representative ambient noise readings for a typical workday for any given location. Data will be collected when no construction activities are occurring. The average of the 6 readings taken from each period (18 readings total) will constitute the baseline ambient noise level (hourly average Leq). Taking six readings during each baseline period will account for peaks in noise levels attributed to ephemeral bursts (e.g., sirens, civilian traffic, non-Project airplanes or helicopters, civilian recreation, etc.).

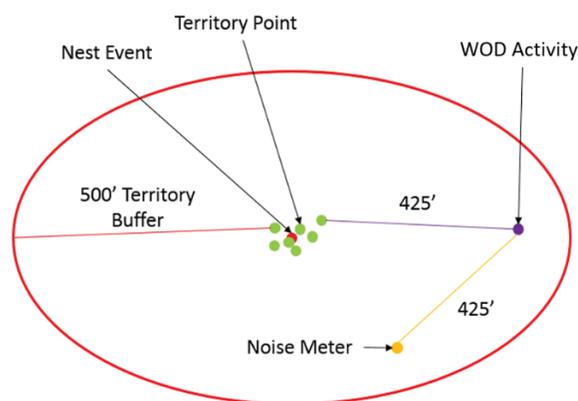
2.1.2 Construction Noise Monitoring

When construction activities begin or resume, noise levels will be recorded for 30 seconds every 20 minutes (plus or minus 5 minutes) each hour during construction activities. Readings will be taken at the top of the hour and then 20 minutes later for each of two additional periods for consistency. The average of the three readings taken each hour will constitute the hourly average Leq during construction.

The location at which the noise monitoring is to take place will be a sufficient distance away from the resource so as to not create additional disturbance, but at an equal distance from construction as it relates to the biological resource (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Noise Monitoring Location

West of Devers Upgrade Project Wildlife Noise Monitoring Plan



In accordance with FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2c, construction activities adjacent to active nest locations will be monitored for noise output throughout the entire duration of construction activity, or until the nest is deemed no longer active by the Qualified Biologist.

2.1.2.1 Noise Level Exceedances

If construction noise exceeds 8 dBA above ambient levels or 70 dBA (hourly average Leq) (whichever is greater), or if the Qualified Biologist determines that construction activities are disturbing nesting activities, the Qualified Biologist has the authority and responsibility to halt the associated Project

activities until noise and/or disturbance in the vicinity of the nest can be reduced to below acceptable thresholds (see Section 3.3). If noise levels exceed the threshold limits at the edge of nesting territories and/or a no-construction buffer around the nest cannot be maintained, construction will be deferred in that area until nestlings have fledged.

2.2 NOISE MINIMIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

If the hourly average noise threshold is exceeded, or if the Qualified Biologist determines that construction activities are disturbing nesting birds, SCE will implement additional noise-reduction techniques to reduce Project noise to below the thresholds. In accordance with FEIR/FEIS MM WIL-2c, noise-reduction techniques can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Temporary noise barriers or sound walls (for example, hay barriers)
- Noise pads or dampers
- Replacement and update of noisy equipment
- Moveable task noise barriers
- Turning off vehicle engines and other equipment whenever possible, or queueing trucks to distribute idling noise
- Locating vehicle access points and loading and shipping facilities away from the nest site
- Reducing the number of noisy activities that occur simultaneously
- Relocating noisy stationary equipment away from the nest sites
- Situating the work area so that louder activities occur as far from the nest location as possible
- Parking equipment or personal vehicles in a manner that helps deflect construction noise away from the nest location
- Temporarily discontinuing work in the area

In addition to the aforementioned noise-reduction methods, Project-related helicopter use will be avoided or managed to the extent feasible during nesting bird season (February 1 to August 31). MM WIL-1b also dictates that any unnecessary noise (such as blaring radios) shall be avoided.

REPORTING

3.1 DAILY REPORTS

If construction occurs inside (when permitted) or adjacent to an active nest buffer, a Qualified Biologist shall complete the WOD Noise Data Sheet as described in Section 2.2 and append it to a FRED report.

A separate daily monitoring report will also be submitted, documenting detailing construction activities. The daily monitoring report will specifically address whether the activities exceeded the noise level threshold, and if the biological resource (nesting birds, etc.) showed any signs of distress relative to construction noise or other Project activities. All nest visits will also be documented.

3.2 ANNUAL REPORTS

SCE will coordinate with the Qualified Biologist to provide an annual written report to USFWS, CDFW, CPUC, and BLM detailing any noncompliance issues, including all reported impacts on wildlife relative to construction noise. In accordance with FEIR/FEIS MMs WIL-1c and VEG-1a, SCE will provide the annual report by January 31 following each year of construction for the Project. The annual report will describe the activities determined to be out of compliance with the mitigation and monitoring measures and the corrective measures implemented to bring the Project back into compliance.

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APPENDIX A

NOISE MONITORING SHEET

West of Devers Noise Measurement Data Sheet for Biological Resources

Date: MM/DD/YYYY	Segment:	Site:	Monitor:
Nest Event #: #####		Location of Noise Monitor (UTMs):	

Start Time	End Time	Leq	L _{max}	L _{min}	Precon	During	Post	Comment

Notes:
 Leq = equivalent sound level
 Lmax = maximum sound level
 Lmin = minimum sound level
 UTM = Universal Transverse Mercator