

### 3.16 Recreation

This section presents the environmental setting and analysis of impacts on recreational resources resulting from the Proposed Project. This section includes existing information for recreational resources in the Proposed Project area, applicable regulations, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant effects.

#### 3.16.1 Environmental Setting

##### Regional Setting

##### Federal Recreational Areas

The Proposed Project crosses through two federal recreational areas: the Sequoia National Forest (SNF) and the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF), as shown in Figure 3.16-1.

Approximately 0.4 miles of Segment 1 is located on the SNF, and approximately 0.1 mile of Segment 2 is located on the LPNF.

##### *Sequoia National Forest*

The SNF is located at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada mountain, and approximately 26 percent of the SNF is within Kern County (U.S. Forest Service, 2019). The SNF in Kern County is approximately 0.5 mile northeast of the City of Bakersfield. The Proposed Project is located within the Lower Kern River Place of the SNF in the southwest portion of the forest. The Land Management Plan for the SNF designates the *recreation opportunity spectrum* (ROS) into six classes: primitive, semi-primitive, nonmotorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, rural, and urban. The ROS for the portion of the Proposed Project area within the SNR is designated as roaded natural (U.S. Forest Service, 2022). The roaded natural class includes areas 0.5 mile or less from roads and trails open to motorized use (USDA Forest Service, n.d.). The Lower Kern River Place is considered a river recreation area, with a mixture of dispersed and developed recreational opportunities.

The Lower Kern River Place is frequently used as a recreational area due to its close proximity to the City of Bakersfield and easy river access along State Route 178. Day use activities include fishing, picnicking, and whitewater rafting (USDA Forest Service, p. Lower Kern River). Limited overnight opportunities are available in the Lower Kern River Place. Visitor data for this portion of the SNF is not available. While the Lower Kern River Place is a popular recreational area in the SNF, the Proposed Project does not traverse any developed recreational facilities such as trailheads, campsites, or recreational buildings in the area. The nearest developed recreational facility is the Live Oak Picnic Site located approximately 3 miles northeast of the alignment.

##### *Los Padres National Forest*

The LPNF encompasses over 1.75 million acres and extends across six different counties, including Kern County. The northern boundary of the LPNF is located in southern Kern

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County. An estimated 1 million persons visit the LPNF annually (USDA Forest Service, Natural Resource Manager, 2019). The ROSs for lands traversed by the Proposed Project alignment are classified as semi-primitive non-motorized and roaded natural. As discussed above, the roaded natural class includes areas 0.5 mile or less from roads and trails open to motorized use. The semi-primitive non-motorized classification includes areas 0.5 mile to 3 miles from roads. There are 1,680 miles of trails and 109 developed sites across the LPNF, including campgrounds, picnic and day use areas, beaches, swimming sites, and scenic overlooks (USDA Forest Service, 2007). No specific recreational features are present in the small northeastern portion of the LPNF that is traversed by the Proposed Project alignment.

### **State Recreational Areas**

#### ***Fort Tejon State Historic Park***

Fort Tejon State Historic Park is an approximately 205-acre park managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The park is located on the west side of Interstate 5 (I-5), approximately 35 miles south of the City of Bakersfield, and 67 miles north of the City of Los Angeles, as shown in Figure 3.16-1. The park was established in 1940 to preserve the historic U.S. Army fort that was built in the mid-1850s (California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1989) and features the historic remains of the U.S. Army fort, and park facilities include a visitor center, historic officers' quarters, picnic tables, group camp area, and restrooms. Approximately 14 acres of the park are developed for recreation and historical education opportunities. The Fort Tejon State Historic Park General Plan (1989) states that visitor activities at Fort Tejon can be divided into two usages: historical appreciation and education or a roadside stop off the I-5 highway where visitors may refresh or have a picnic. Approximately 17,000 individuals visited the park from 2018 to 2019 (California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2022). The Proposed Project would cross the eastern boundary of the park along Lebec Road and through the parking lot, but the alignment is not adjacent any recreational facilities in the park.

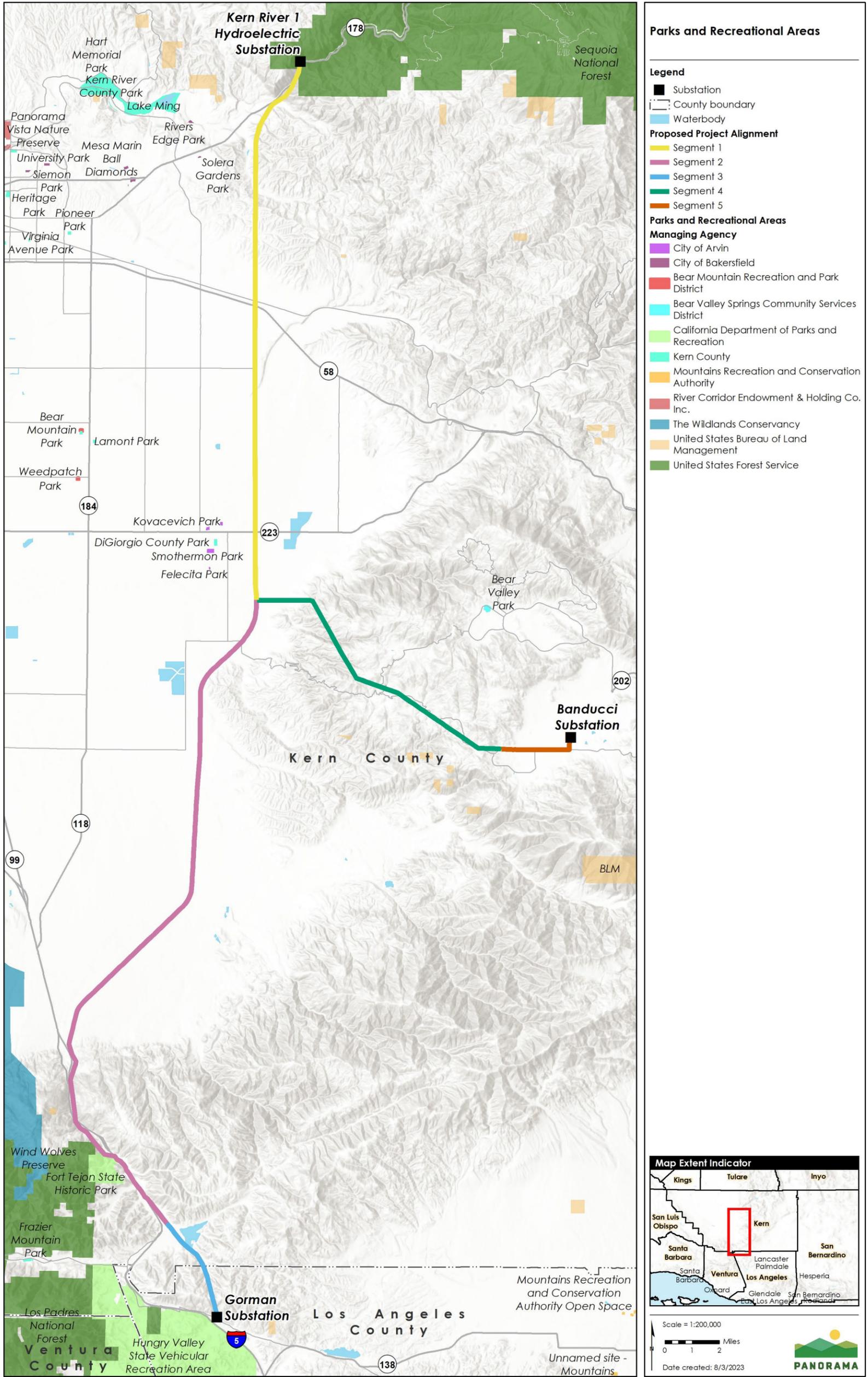
### **Local Recreational Areas**

#### ***Kern County***

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan divides Kern County into five areas: Area 1, Area 2, Area 3, Area 4, and Area 5 plus a Sub-area 5b (Kern County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2010). The Proposed Project is located within Area 2, Area 3, and Sub-area 5b, which cover southeast Kern County, greater Bakersfield, and the south of Bakersfield, respectively. There are no parks within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Project.

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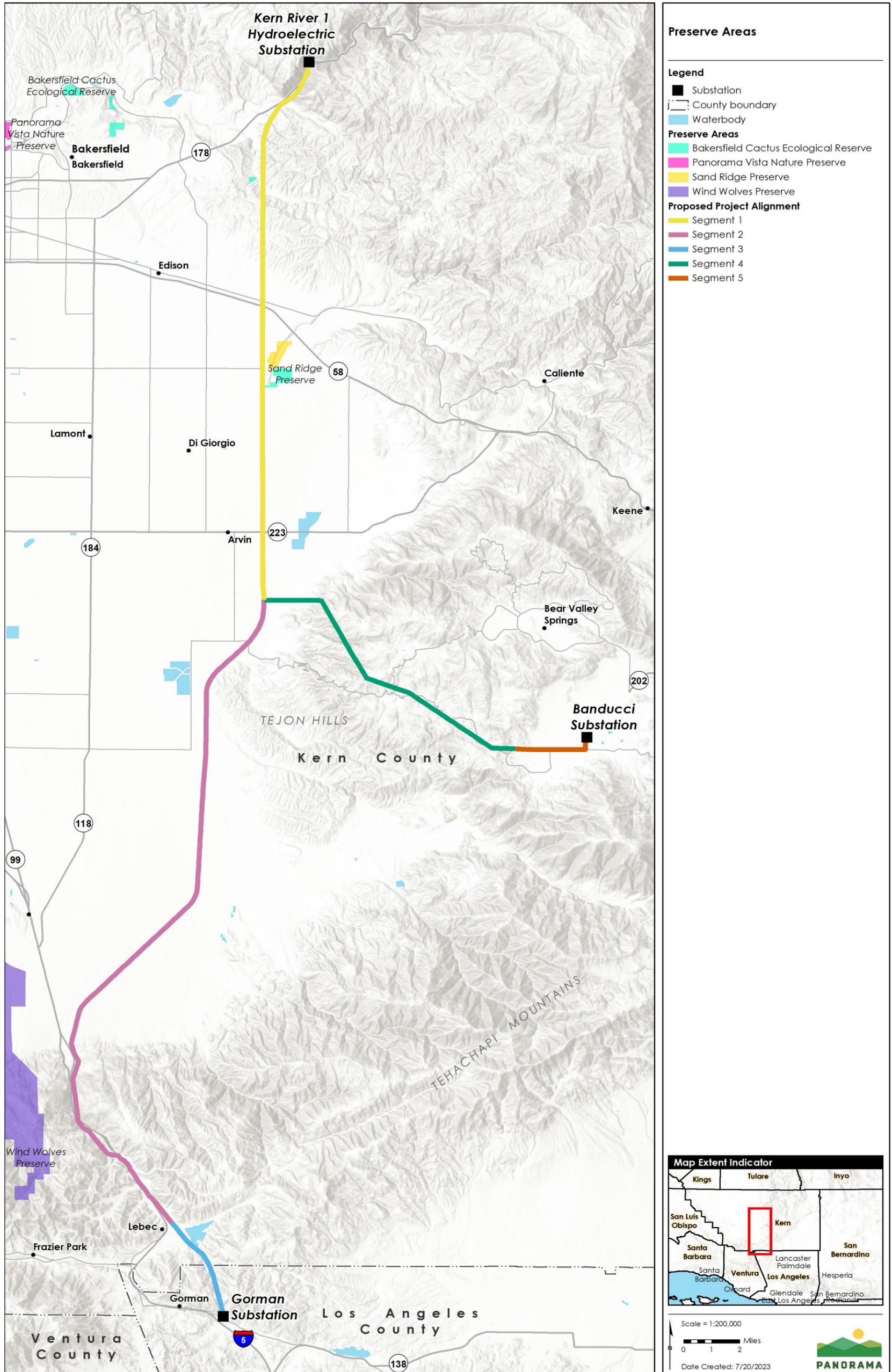
Figure 3.16-1 Parks and Recreational Areas in the Vicinity of the Proposed Project



Source: (GreenInfo Network, 2022)

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Figure 3.16-2 Preserves in the Vicinity of the Proposed Project



Sources: (GreenInfo Network, 2022)

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### *Los Angeles County*

The southern portion of the Proposed Project is located in the unincorporated Northwest Antelope Valley area of Los Angeles County. There are no Los Angeles County recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Project.

### *City of Arvin*

The Proposed Project is located immediately west of Tower Line Road, which marks the eastern boundary of the City of Arvin. Several small parks operated and maintained by the City of Arvin Parks and Recreation Department are located within the City of Arvin, including Smothermon Park, Digiorgio County Park, and Kovacevich Park, as shown in Figure 3.16-1. The nearest park in the City of Arvin is Kovacevich Park located 1.2 miles west of Segment 1. Smothermon Park and Digiorgio County Park are approximately 1.5 miles west of the Proposed Project. There are no parks or other recreational facilities within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Project in the City of Arvin.

### *City of Bakersfield*

Ample parks and recreational opportunities are available within the City of Bakersfield. The City of Bakersfield Recreation and Parks Department operates 61 parks, four public pools, two sports complexes, and 27.8 miles of bike paths (City of Bakersfield, 2022). The private Rio Bravo Country Club and golf course is approximately 1.3 miles west of the alignment, and the Solano Garden Park is approximately 2.0 miles west of the alignment (see Figure 3.16-1). There are no City of Bakersfield parks or other recreational facilities within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Project.

### *Preserve Areas*

There are two preserves in the vicinity of the Proposed Project with recreational use: Wind Wolves Preserve and the Panorama Vista Nature Preserve, as shown in Figure 3.16-2. The Wind Wolves Preserve, which is owned and managed by the Wildlands Conservancy for the protection of biological resources and are not available for public recreation, is located 1.25 miles west of the Proposed Project. The Wind Wolves Preserve contains grasslands and saltbush along with several special-status wildlife and plant species. The Panorama Vista Nature Preserve is a 937-acre preserve 9 miles west of the Proposed Project alignment.

## **Environmental Setting by Segment**

### **Segment 1**

The northern terminus of Segment 1 is located within SNF. There are no Kern County, City of Bakersfield, or City of Arvin recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of Segment 1.

### **Segment 2**

The southern portion of Segment 2 is within the LPNF and the Fort Tejon National Historic Park. The Proposed Project alignment would cross through the parking lot of the Fort Tejon National Historic Park but is not adjacent any recreational facilities in the park. The Proposed Project is not adjacent any recreational facilities in the LPNF. There are no Kern County, City of Bakersfield, or City of Arvin recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of Segment 2.

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### Segment 3

There are no recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of Segment 3. The LPNF is located over 1.25 miles west of Segment 3 and approximately 4 miles west of the Gorman substation.

### Segment 4

There are no recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of Segment 4.

### Segment 5

There are no recreational areas or facilities within 0.5 mile of Segment 5. The Brite Lake and Brite Valley Aquatic Recreation Area, located in Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District, are approximately 3 miles east of the Banducci substation.

### 3.16.2 Applicable Regulations, Policies and Standards

Federal, state, and local regulations were reviewed for applicability to the Proposed Project.

#### Federal Regulations, Policies and Standards

##### Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan

The Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan describes the strategic direction at the broad program-level for managing the national forest and its resources. The management strategies are consistent with the concept of adaptive management and sustainable resource use. The Plan's program tiers from National Strategic Plan Goals, including the following goals for recreational use:

- Goal 3.1 – Provide for Public Use and Natural Resource Protection
- REC 1 – Recreation Opportunity – Manage National Forest Land to achieve *recreation opportunity spectrum* (ROS) classes

##### Sequoia National Forest, Draft Revised Land Management Plan

Under the National Forest Management Act, all national forests managed by the U.S. Forest Service are required to have a land management plan. The Revised Draft Land Management Plan for the Sequoia National Forest (SNF) is the principal document that identifies long-term desired conditions and general directions for making strategic decisions for the SNF. The plan guides where and under what conditions an activity or project on SNF lands can proceed. The SNF ensures that any project or management activity complies with the plan.

#### State Regulations, Policies, and Standards

##### Fort Tejon State Historic Park General Plan

The Fort Tejon State Historic Park General Plan contains resource management policies and objectives for the long-term management and development of the Fort Tejon State Historic Park. The General Plan addresses the Park's cultural, natural, aesthetic, and recreational resources, interpretation of those resources, land use, facility development, general operation, and coordination with other public and private entities (California State Parks, 1989). The General Plan includes a relevant policy regarding recreational resources, which includes providing for recreational opportunities that are complementary to resource values.

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### **Local Regulations, Policies, and Standards**

The CPUC has sole and exclusive State jurisdiction over the siting and design of the Proposed Project because it authorizes the construction, operation, and maintenance of investor-owned public utility facilities. Pursuant to GO 131-D section XIV.B, “Local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the CPUC’s jurisdiction. However, in locating such projects, the public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters.” Consequently, public utilities are directed to consider local regulations and consult with local agencies, but the counties’ and cities’ regulations are not applicable as the counties and cities do not have jurisdiction over the Proposed Project. Accordingly, the following discussion of local land use laws, regulations, and policies is provided for informational purposes only.

### **Kern County Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The County of Kern Parks and Recreation Master Plan does not contain any goals, policies, or implementation measures relevant to the analysis of recreation for the Proposed Project.

### **Kern County General Plan**

The Kern County General Plan contains goals, policies, or implementation measures relevant to the analysis of recreation for the Proposed Project, including the following:

- Provide recreation opportunities for all citizens of Kern County while avoiding duplication between jurisdictions.

### **Los Angeles County General Plan, Parks and Recreation Element**

The Los Angeles County General Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Element guides the long-term conservation of natural resources and preservation of available open space areas. The Conservation and Natural Resources Element contains a number of goals and policies relevant to the analysis of recreation for the Proposed Project, including the following:

#### *Policies*

- Ensure that County parks and recreational facilities are clean, safe, inviting, usable and accessible.

### **City of Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan**

The Open Space Element of the City of Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan establishes regulations aimed to protect the Kern River (City of Bakersfield, 2002). The following goals and policies are relevant to the analysis of recreation for the Proposed Project.

#### *Goals*

- Conserve and enhance the unique aspects of open space within the planning area
- Locate and site development to minimize disruption of open space areas

#### *Policies*

- Promote the establishment, maintenance, and protection of the planning area’s open space resources, including the following:

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- Outdoor recreation
  - Parks
  - Kern River corridor
- Development location and siting should be sensitive to its relationship to the Kern River

### **City of Arvin General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element**

The Conservation and Open Space Element outlines the goals, policies, and implementation measures for the preservation and management of biological and cultural resources, soils, minerals, energy, air quality, and open space (City of Arvin, 2019).

#### *Goals*

- Promote the preservation of open space in the area for important non-renewable and renewable resources.

### **3.16.3 Applicant Proposed Measures**

SCE has proposed measures to reduce environmental impacts. The significance of the impact is first considered prior to application of applicant proposed measures (APMs) and a significance determination is made. The implementation of the APMs is then considered as part of the Proposed Project when determining whether impacts would be significant and thus would require mitigation. These APMs would be incorporated as part of any CPUC project approval, and SCE would be required to adhere to the APMs as well as any identified mitigation measures. The APMs are included in the MMRP for the Proposed Project, and the implementation of the measures would be monitored and documented in the same manner as mitigation measures. There are no applicant proposed measures (APMs) that would apply for potential recreation impacts.

### **3.16.4 Environmental Analysis**

#### **Summary of Impacts**

Table 3.16-1 presents a summary of the CEQA significance criteria and impacts on recreation that would occur during the construction and operation and maintenance (O&M) phases of the Proposed Project.

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**Table 3.16-1 Summary of Proposed Project Impacts to Recreation**

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### Impact Discussion

**a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

The Proposed Project involves construction and operation and maintenance of a 66 kV subtransmission line, which would replace an existing subtransmission line. The existing 66 kV power line provides power to a portion of unincorporated Kern County, the city of Tehachapi, and the surrounding communities. The infrastructure also has the ability to provide power to communities directly served from the existing Gorman and Frazier Park substations, as needed. The Proposed Project would not provide service to any new users or area. The Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth, as discussed in Section 3.14 Population and Housing. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. The impact on recreational access and physical deterioration of recreational facilities that may result from construction and operation and maintenance of the subtransmission line is discussed below.

#### Construction

The Proposed Project crosses the SNF, the LPNF, and Fort Tejon State Historic Park. The northern portion of Segment 1 intersects the SNF, and Segment 2 intersects the LPNF and Fort Tejon State Historic Park. There are no developed recreational facilities or trails in the vicinity of the Proposed Project alignment, except for the Fort Tejon State Historic Park. During conductor removal and installation activities within the Fort Tejon State Park parking lot, access to the Fort Tejon State Historic Park’s parking lot and pedestrian traffic through the area would be restricted for public safety. The parking lot restriction would last approximately two days and would be coordinated with park staff. Given the proximity of the park to I-5, and that conductor removal and installation activities across highways generally occur during nighttime hours, the limitation of access to the park may occur during the time the park is closed. However, should construction activities occur during daytime activities at the Fort Tejon State Historic Park, the

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impact on recreational access and the recreational facility could be significant. In addition, the construction activities have the potential to damage the pavement within the parking lot, which is a potentially significant impact from physical deterioration of the facility. Mitigation Measure Recreation-1 would reduce impacts on recreational access and from physical deterioration by requiring close coordination with Fort Tejon State Park prior to construction activities, advance public notification of any impacts on parking lot or park access, and restoration of the parking areas impacted by construction. Impacts from physical deterioration of parks would be less than significant with mitigation.

#### Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not increase use of any recreational facilities because operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would not create any permanent employment opportunities and would not increase the population of the area (refer to Section 3.14 Population and Housing). Inspection and maintenance activities would continue to be conducted annually, as similar to the inspection and maintenance activities for the existing subtransmission line. The inspection and maintenance activities would not cause physical deterioration of any recreational facility due to the short duration and low intensity of maintenance activities on an annual basis. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

**Required APMs and MMs:** MM Recreation-1

#### Mitigation Measures

##### Mitigation Measure Recreation-1: Fort Tejon State Park

SCE shall notify the Fort Tejon State Park of the location, timing, and duration of all construction activities within the Fort Tejon State Park parking area at least 60 days prior to construction in the area. SCE shall also post notices within the parking area at least 14 days prior to planned construction activities. The notices shall notify the location, date, and time of any impacted access to the parking area and potential alternative parking locations.

During construction within the Fort Tejon State Park parking area, SCE shall utilize flaggers to maintain safe vehicle and pedestrian access to the parking area to the extent feasible.

SCE shall photo document the existing condition of all work areas within the Fort Tejon State Park parking area. SCE shall repair any damage to pavement or other facilities within the Fort Tejon State Park parking area to pre-construction conditions. SCE shall photo document the post-construction conditions of the parking area after construction is complete.

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**Applicable Locations:** Fort Tejon State Park and parking area.

#### Performance Standards and Timing:

**Before construction:** Notification of recreationists and State Park. Notification of State Park 60 days prior to construction; notification of public 14 days prior to construction.

**During construction:** N/A

**After construction:** Repair of any damage to the parking area to match pre-construction conditions; provide photographs pre- and post-construction.

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

The Proposed Project does not include the construction or expansion of any recreational facilities. As discussed in Section 3.14 Population and Housing, the Proposed Project would not create any permanent sources of employment and would not result in a population increase. As a result, there would be no adverse physical effect on the environment from the construction of new, or expansion of existing, recreational facilities. The Proposed Project would replace or modifying existing facilities and would not create any indirect demand for new or expanded recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**Required APMs and MMs:** None required.

### 3.16.5 References

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