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## CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.13 RECREATION

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

#### 4.13.0 Introduction

This section describes the existing recreational facilities in the vicinity of the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) East County Substation Project (Proposed Project) site and evaluates potential impacts to recreational resources that may result from construction or operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. Recreational facilities may be disrupted or inconvenienced for a short period of time during construction of the 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line component due to the proximity to heavy equipment use; however, such impacts will be less than significant.

#### 4.13.1 Methodology

The recreation analysis involved a review of various documents including aerial photographs of the Proposed Project area, the County of San Diego General Plan, the Eastern San Diego County Resource Management Plan, and the Eastern San Diego County Management Framework Plan. Research also included review of the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, United States (U.S.) Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute series quadrangle maps, Thomas Brothers Guide maps, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) El Cajon Map, the Southern California Gazetteer, geographic information systems data, and official San Diego County websites. Personal communication with local agency representatives and visits to the Proposed Project site confirmed existing recreational uses.

### **4.13.2 Existing Conditions**

#### **Regulatory Background**

##### ***Bureau of Land Management Eastern San Diego County Management Framework Plan***

The Eastern San Diego County Management Framework Plan (MFP), approved in 1981, reflects management decisions specific to the BLM's Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit. This area encompasses 98,902 acres of public lands located adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the California Desert Conservation Area. The MFP guides the management of resources on public lands in eastern San Diego County, including mineral deposits, soils, watersheds, livestock grazing allotments, and recreational, cultural, and biological resources. The 138 kV transmission line component of the Proposed Project will cross the Eastern San Diego Planning Unit.

#### **Regional Recreation Areas**

Regional recreational areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Project include the Jacumba Wilderness Area, Anza-Borrego Desert Park, Table Mountain, and the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area. These facilities are shown in Figure 4.13-1: Recreational Areas Map.

Preserving the Jacumba Mountains, the approximately 30,000-acre Jacumba Wilderness Area, located approximately one mile east of the Proposed Project site, provides desert recreationists with opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking.

The largest state park in California, Anza-Borrego State Park, located approximately one mile north of the Proposed Project site, contains 500 miles of dirt roads and 12 wilderness areas that are used for camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and horseback riding.

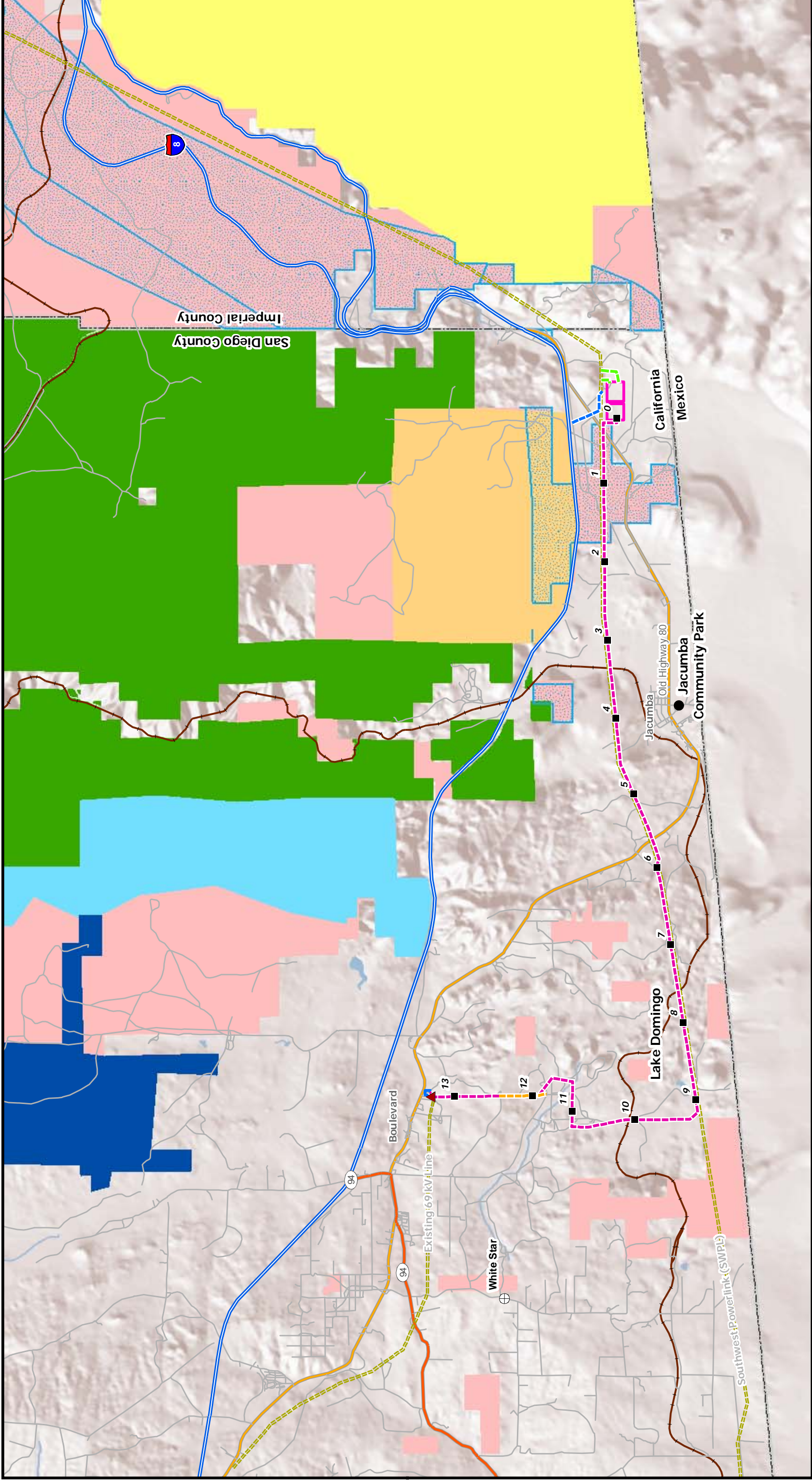
Managed by the BLM and designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Table Mountain is located north of Interstate 8 and approximately one mile north of the Proposed Project site. It is surrounded by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Recreational activities at Table Mountain include camping, hiking, and rock hounding.

Managed by the BLM, the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area, located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Proposed Project site, provides a variety of uses, including wildlife conservation, livestock grazing, and recreation. Recreational activities include camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, photography, and off-highway vehicle use.

The only Proposed Project component that is located in or crosses recreational areas is the 138 kV transmission line. The recreational areas in the proximity of this component are described as follows.

#### **138 kV Transmission Line**

No parks or designated recreational areas are crossed by the 138 kV transmission line; however, the line crosses BLM-managed land between approximate Milepost (MP) 0.3 and MP 1.8. This area is designated as Multiple Use Class M (Moderate Use). In accordance with the Eastern San Diego County Management Framework Plan, land in Multiple Use Class M provides for a wide



**Figure 4.13-1: Recreational Areas Map**

**East County Substation Project**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed SWPL Loop-In</li> <li>Proposed 138 kV Line</li> <li>Proposed 12 kV Temporary Distribution Tap</li> <li>445 Circuit Collocated with 138 kV Line</li> <li>Existing Transmission Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed ECO Substation</li> <li>Boulevard Substation Rebuild</li> <li>Proposed 138 kV Line Milepost</li> <li>Existing Boulevard Substation</li> <li>Communication Facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West-Wide Energy Corridor</li> <li>McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area</li> <li>Jacumba Wilderness</li> <li>Carrizo Gorge Wilderness</li> <li>Anza Borrego Desert State Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table Mountain ACEC</li> <li>Other BLM Lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interstate</li> <li>Highway</li> <li>Local Road</li> <li>Major Road</li> <li>Railroad</li> </ul>
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variety of present and future uses, including mining, livestock grazing, recreation, energy, and utility development. Recreational activities on BLM-managed land include backpacking, hunting, hiking, camping, sightseeing, and four-wheel drive touring.

In addition to the BLM-managed land crossed by the transmission line, three additional recreational features—the Jacumba Community Park, Lake Domingo, and the Lakeside Sportsman’s Club—are in close proximity or adjacent to the line. The Jacumba Community Park is located 0.7 mile south of approximate MP 3.8 and the 138 kV transmission line. This approximately 20-acre park, adjacent to Old U.S. Highway 80 in the unincorporated community of Jacumba, consists primarily of a playground, baseball field, and basketball court. The majority of the park is undeveloped open space. Lake Domingo is approximately 300 feet to the north of the line at approximate MP 8.8. This lake serves as a reservoir for San Diego County as well as a recreational fishing area. The Lakeside Sportsman’s Club is located at approximately MP 7.4 and approximately 2,400 feet south of the 138 kV transmission line. The Lakeside Sportsman’s Club is a private organization that has facilities that include dry campgrounds and an outdoor shooting range.

### **4.13.3 Impacts**

#### **Significance Criteria**

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. Impacts to recreation will be considered significant if the Proposed Project:

- Increases the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities to the extent that substantial physical deterioration of the facility will occur or be accelerated
- Requires the construction or expansion of recreational facilities to meet population demand, potentially resulting in an adverse physical effect on the environment

#### **Question 4.13a – Recreational Facilities Use**

##### ***Construction – No Impact***

A temporary increase in population may occur as a result of Proposed Project construction; however, the worst-case scenario is an increase by approximately 60 workers and will be short-term (lasting up to 24 months). The majority of the workers will use accommodations in El Centro or El Cajon and will not likely utilize recreational resources in the area due to the nature of the construction work. This temporary increase in population will not put additional demand on existing recreation facility use due to the abundance of large recreational facilities in the area and the small, temporary nature of the increase. Thus, no impact is anticipated.

##### ***Operations and Maintenance – No Impact***

The Proposed Project will not create a need for additional housing or long-term population immigration sufficient to result in a permanent increase in park use. No new employees will be hired to operate or maintain the Proposed Project facilities as the substations will be unmanned and the new 138 kV transmission line will be operated and maintained by existing SDG&E

personnel. Likewise, the White Star Communication Facility will continue to be operated by the same personnel. Thus, no impact will occur.

#### **Question 4.13b – Recreational Facilities Changes**

##### ***Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact***

###### *Temporary*

The new 138 kV transmission line will travel through undesignated land that is managed by the BLM and available for use by the public for camping, backpacking, hiking, hunting, sightseeing, and four-wheel drive touring. Visitors to the area may experience a slight temporary increase in noise, dust, and odors from construction equipment and helicopter use during construction of the Proposed Project components periodically over a period no longer than 24 months, as described further in Section 4.3 Air Quality and Section 4.10 Noise. The BLM-managed land that is crossed by the 138 kV transmission line will be temporarily unavailable to recreationists for up to approximately one month during construction on BLM-managed land. Impacts will be less than significant because the transmission line will be installed parallel to the existing Southwest Powerlink (SWPL), the disruption will be for a short period of time affecting only a 1.2-mile-long area, and abundant alternative recreational opportunities exist in the immediate vicinity.

The 138 kV transmission line will travel approximately 300 feet south of Lake Domingo and 2,400 feet north of the Lakeside Sportsman’s Club. Visitors that frequent these facilities may be exposed to a minimal temporary increase in noise, dust, and odors from construction equipment and helicopter use during construction of the line. The increase will be minimal due to the facilities distance from the line. All access to these recreational facilities will be maintained throughout construction. Thus, impacts will be less than significant.

###### *Permanent*

The Proposed Project will result in the temporary removal of approximately one acre of BLM-managed land from public use due to the construction of the new 138 kV transmission line. The new right-of-way (ROW) will abut and be parallel to the existing SWPL ROW and is a small percentage of the available BLM-managed land in the area (less than one percent). In addition, the ROW will still be available for public use once construction is complete. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

##### ***Operation and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact***

Inspection and maintenance of the 138 kV transmission line on BLM-managed land will be conducted annually in conjunction with SWPL maintenance activities. These inspection activities will not restrict recreational activities on BLM-managed land. Maintenance activities could potentially restrict recreational activities on the BLM-managed land, but this would occur only for a few days once a year. Access through BLM-managed land will be maintained during this work. As a result, impacts will be less than significant. All other Proposed Project components will be located on private land at least 0.5 mile from recreational facilities. Thus, no impacts will occur.



#### 4.13.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project will not result in any significant impacts to recreational resources; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

#### 4.13.5 References

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