



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DWR Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement Project

Supplemental EIR

To: California Office of Planning and Research Responsible and Trustee
Agencies Other Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

Project: Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement Project

Lead Agency: Department of Water Resources

Date: November 27, 2007

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies and interested parties that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as the Lead Agency is beginning preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement Project. The SEIR will supplement the 1997 East Branch Extension Phase I SEIR. The proposed project is located south and west of the intersection of Mill Creek Road (State Route 38) and Bryant Street in the City of Yucaipa. Crafton Hills Reservoir is located in the easterly section of Crafton Hills. The reservoir would be enlarged and a new dam built in the adjoining drainage to the south. In addition, a segment of pipeline approximately one half mile in length and 48 inches in diameter would be constructed connecting the existing East Branch Extension Pipeline-Phase I with the Yucaipa Pipeline. **Figure 1** (attached) provides a site plan of the proposed project.

DWR is soliciting the views of interested persons and agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental resources and topics to be studied in the SEIR. In accordance with CEQA, agencies are requested to review the project description provided in this NOP and provide comments on environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the agency. The SEIR will be used by DWR when considering approval of the Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement Project.

CEQA sets the review and comment period for an NOP to end 30 days after publication. However, the DWR requests comments to this NOP be received no later than the close of business on January 15, 2008.

Please include a return address and contact name with your comments. Please send comments via mail or email to the address show below:

California Department of Water Resources
c/o Tom Barnes, ESA
707 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 1450
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Email: tbarnes@esassoc.com
Telephone: (213) 599-4300
Fax: (213) 599-4301

A scoping meeting open to the public will be held to receive public comments and suggestions on the project. The scoping meeting will be open to the public and held at the following location:

DATE: Tuesday, December 11, 2007
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: City of Yucaipa Community Center, Banquet Room
34900 Oak Glen Road
Yucaipa, CA 92399

PROJECT LOCATION

The existing Crafton Hills Reservoir is located within the easterly section of Crafton Hills in the City of Yucaipa, San Bernardino County, California at an elevation of 2,925 feet. The location of the proposed one half mile-long pipeline would parallel Mill Creek Road approximately 150 feet to the north terminating just to the west of Bryant Street.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Crafton Hills Reservoir is owned by DWR and operated by San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) and is part of the East Branch Extension of the State Water Project (SWP). The reservoir was originally built as a component of DWR's East Branch Extension-Phase I. Its principal features are a zoned earthfill dam, an uncontrolled overflow spillway, a 54-inch diameter inlet pipeline, 54-inch diameter outlet pipeline, a 12-inch diameter emergency release blow-off, and access roads. The reservoir was initially evaluated in the *Supplemental EIR No. 1 for the East Branch Extension Phase I* certified by DWR in March 1998. The Phase I SEIR supplemented the 1994 Water Importation Project EIR prepared by the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA).

PROJECT NEED

The existing Crafton Hills Reservoir size is insufficient for current needs, which requires DWR to run the pumps at Crafton Hills Pump Station during peak energy demand times of the day. This puts unnecessary load on the electrical grid system. Enlargement of the reservoir will allow DWR to fill the reservoir during off-peak periods of the day, relieving pressure on the energy grid, and lowering pumping costs. The reservoir expansion would not increase the conveyance capacity of the East Branch Extension; but would substantially enhance the system's operating flexibility and reliability.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would enlarge the existing Crafton Hills Reservoir from the current storage capacity of 85 acre-feet to approximately 225 acre-feet. A notch in the ridge

dividing the drainages would be excavated and serve as a connecting channel between the existing and proposed reservoirs. An earthfill dam would be constructed within the drainage course adjacent to the existing reservoir. Access roads, cut slopes, and operational dam equipment would be installed. (See Figure 1)

In addition, a one half mile segment of a 48-inch diameter connector pipeline would be built to connect the East Branch Extension Pipeline-Reach 1 to the 48-inch diameter Yucaipa Pipeline owned and operated by the SBVMWD. The pipeline would allow DWR to maintain water deliveries to Reach 2 and Reach 3 segments of the East Branch Extension while the reservoir is being enlarged. After the proposed project is completed, the connector pipeline would remain in place to provide an emergency back that currently does not exist in the event of a reservoir outage.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The SEIR will assess the physical changes to the environment that would likely result from construction and operation of the Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement, including direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. Potential impacts of the proposed project are summarized below. The SEIR will identify mitigation measures if necessary to minimize potentially significant impacts of the proposed project.

Aesthetics

Local aesthetics may be temporarily impacted during construction. Once constructed the dam could alter long range views of the Crafton Hills from surrounding land uses. The impact to the scenic character of the area could be significantly impacted. The Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement could add to the scenic character of the area. The SEIR will evaluate the proposed project for impacts related to aesthetic resources, including consistency of the project with the City of Yucaipa General Plan, local ordinances and state and federal regulations.

Air Quality and Global Warming / Climate Change

The proposed project is located within the South Coast Air Basin. Construction activities would consist of excavation only. No blasting will occur. Construction emissions would be generated from construction equipment exhaust, earth movement, construction workers' commute, and material hauling for the entire construction period. The project's construction emissions could adversely affect the regional air quality within the South Coast Air Basin. In addition, construction equipment would emit greenhouse gases suspected of contributing to global warming. The SEIR will estimate daily exhaust and fugitive emissions based on detailed construction activities by project phasing to assess the potential long-term and short-term air quality impact. The SEIR will identify sensitive receptors within the project area that could be adversely affected by the project construction. If necessary, measures to mitigate impacts to minimize their significance will be developed or recommended for implementation. Once constructed the expanded reservoir would not increase existing emissions of criteria pollutants or greenhouse gases.

Biological Resources

Construction would occur in areas with natural habitats. The SEIR will evaluate potential impacts of the project on sensitive habitats and species. Mitigation measures will be developed if necessary to minimize potential adverse effects of the project.

Cultural Resources

Excavation for the proposed project could encounter previously unknown archaeological resources. The SEIR will evaluate the potential impacts of the project on archaeological resources. The SEIR will identify project design alternatives, as necessary, as well as mitigation measures if necessary to minimize impacts to cultural resources.

The rock type in the reservoir area is a metagranitic rock that is non-fossiliferous and no paleontological resources are expected to be encountered. Nonetheless, cultural resources will be discussed in the SEIR.

Geology and Soils

The Crafton Hills Reservoir Enlargement will be founded on bedrock comprised of metagranitic rock, the same rock type that the existing Crafton Hills Reservoir is founded on. There is minimal soil cover overlying the bedrock except in the lower elevations of the proposed reservoir. The project area is located within a seismically active region of California. Seismic activity could cause considerable ground shaking in the project area. The proposed dam would be subject to Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) design and construction requirements. The project would not affect access to mineral resources. The SEIR will evaluate the potential geologic hazards associated with the proposed project and identify mitigation measures, as necessary, to minimize impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project area is located in a previously undeveloped area. It is highly unlikely that contaminated soils would be encountered during excavation activities. Nonetheless, the EIR will evaluate known and potentially occurring hazardous materials. DWR would be subject to state and federal hazardous materials handling and disposal regulations.

Hydrology, Groundwater and Water Quality

Construction of the proposed project would be subject to storm water discharge requirements. Once constructed, the facilities would not increase storm flows, degrade water quality or deplete groundwater. The SEIR will identify storm water quality protection measures required during construction activities. The SEIR will identify mitigation measures, as necessary, to minimize potential storm water runoff water quality impacts.

Land Use

The proposed project would convert open space to a raw water reservoir. Construction activities associated with the project could result in short-term disturbances to adjacent land uses. Hiking trails in the Crafton Hills could be temporarily affected by the project. Otherwise, no recreational facilities would be affected. The project would not affect agricultural lands. The SEIR will identify the project's potential effects on land uses and will evaluate the project's consistency with the General Plans for the City of Yucaipa and the County of San Bernardino. The SEIR will evaluate the proposed project's compatibility with neighboring land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, open space etc.) and will identify mitigation measures, as necessary, to minimize any significant land use impacts.

Noise and Light

Construction activities associated with the project would generate short-term noise that could affect nearby residences. Construction activity would be required to comply with local noise ordinances. The SEIR will evaluate the proximity of sensitive land uses with noise-generating activities associated with construction. The SEIR will identify mitigation measures, as necessary, to minimize impacts. Once constructed, the facility would not result in increased noise or light sources.

Traffic and Transportation

Construction activities could temporarily increase traffic on roadways, due to worker commute and material deliveries including concrete deliveries. No soil would be hauled from the dam site; however, there is potential that excavated material from the pipeline excavation work may be removed from the construction area. Additionally, engineered fill and reservoir lining may be delivered to the construction sites. The SEIR will describe the duration and extent of impacts on the roadways affected by the proposed project and will identify mitigation measures if necessary to minimize potential adverse effects.

Utilities and Public Services

Excavation could encounter underground utilities during installation of the pipeline. As part of the project, DWR would require construction contractors to identify and avoid impacts to existing utilities. Once constructed, the project would alleviate pressure on the energy grid during peak-demand periods. None of the excavated material from the dam site would require disposal at an off-site landfill as all cut and fill would remain on site. Construction activities could generate some solid waste; impacts to public services will be discussed in the SEIR.

