

**INITIAL STUDY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

Mono Lake Trail Project

August 2007



US Forest Service
INYO NATIONAL FOREST



State of California
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



City of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER

State of California – The Resources Agency

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

US Department of Agriculture – US Forest Service
INYO NATIONAL FOREST

City of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER

DATE: August 20, 2007

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND INTENT TO ADOPT AN INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE PROPOSED MONO BASIN LAKE TRAIL PROJECT

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has directed the preparation of and intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed project, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State CEQA Guidelines. DPR is the lead agency for the proposed project under CEQA.

Project Location: Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center

Description of the Proposed Project:

The project is the development of an interpretive pedestrian trail from the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center to the “Old Marina” shoreline of Mono Lake. Trail construction will consist of closing and rehabilitating routes Z51 and Z53, rehabilitating and restoring several areas where vehicle traffic has gone unmanaged, installing a restroom facility adjacent to the Old Marina site, constructing sections of elevated boardwalk along the trail alignment, and installing interpretive signs and benches at strategic locations along the trail.

The initial study and mitigated negative declaration considers the effects associated with alternatives 2 and 3 as described in the environmental assessment document.

Public Review Period:

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 30 days, beginning August 23, 2007. Written comments should be submitted no later than September 23, 2007, to the following address:

Mike Schlafmann
US Forest Service
Lee Vining, CA 93541
Email – mschlafmann@fs.fed.us
Fax – 760-647-3027

Copies of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration may be reviewed at the following locations during normal business hours:

California State Parks
Northern Service Center
One Capitol Mall - Suite 410
Sacramento, CA 95814
California State Parks

Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center
1 Visitor Center Drive (1/4 mile North of Lee Vining on Hwy 395)
Lee Vining, CA 93541

Lee Vining Ranger Station
Inyo National Forest
Hwy 120 West, 1.5 miles west of Hwy 395
Lee Vining, CA 93541

Inyo National Forest Supervisor's Office
351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200
Bishop, CA 93514

California State Parks
Sierra District Headquarters
7360 Westlake Blvd
Tahoma, CA 96142

Lee Vining Public Library
Lee Vining, California

Mammoth Lakes Library
Mammoth Lakes, California

California State Parks Website
www.parks.ca.gov

Inyo National Forest Web Site
www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/

Your views and comments on potential impacts of the project on the environment are welcomed.

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Mono Lake Trail Project

2. Lead Agency Name & Address:

Inyo National Forest
US Forest Service
PO Box 429
Lee Vining, CA 93541

3. Contact Person & Phone Number: Jon Kazmierski, (760) 647-3010

4. Project Location: Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve and Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area

5. Project Sponsors Name & Address:

Mono Lake Ranger District
Inyo National Forest
US Forest Service
PO Box 429
Lee Vining, CA 93541

Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks)
Sierra District
PO Box 266
Tahoma, CA 96142

6. General Plan Designation: There is no General Plan for the unit.

7. Zoning: Open Space/Recreation as described in the Mono County General Plan

8. Description of Project: Development of an interpretive pedestrian hiking trail from the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center to the "Old Marina" recreation site adjacent to the western shore of Mono Lake.

9. Surrounding Land Uses & Setting: Refer to the "Background" section under the Purpose and Need section of the Environmental Assessment.

10. Approval Required from Public Agencies: US Forest Service and Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks).

ENVIRONMENTAL (INITIAL STUDY) CHECKLIST

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
I. AESTHETICS.				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS

Proposed project is located within Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and California Tufa State Reserve. Proposed project will enhance scenic quality through the restoration of unmanaged recreation areas/bare soil, narrowing of existing road cuts, and restoration of portions of route Z51.

New trail construction along the moraine near the Visitor Center would be visible only from elevated vantage points, motorists traveling along the Highway 395 will see partial views, limited in duration, of the new trail cut. Native soils as trail surface materials in the upper portions of the trail along the north-facing moraine and down route Z51 would help the trail blend in to the surrounding landscape. Sinuous trail alignment along the southern half of route Z51 would help mask the existing road cut that is currently visible from most of the western and northern shores. Rehabilitation of route 51 between Old Marina and the point where the Lake Trail diverts toward the David Gaines Memorial Boardwalk would greatly improve visuals from highway turnouts north of Old Marina.

Elevated boardwalk would be visible from vantage points throughout the western third of the Mono Basin, including the Scenic Highway 395 corridor. New trail construction from Z51 to the existing David Gaines Memorial Boardwalk would be visible from the elevated Highway 395 and vistas near the Visitor Center. Hardened trail surfaces along the ADA portion of the trail would be more visible than native soils and reduce visual quality in the project area. The restroom facility near Old Marina would be visible only from the Old Marina and non-highway routes that approach the recreation site.

MITIGATION

Interpretive panels, boardwalk, and viewing platform will be constructed with materials that minimize daylight reflection and colors that blend with surrounding. Clustering of interpretive signs in strategic locations and placing of benches under mature pinyon pines will help hide these structures.

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

Would the project*:

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

* In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997), prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model for use in assessing impacts on agricultural and farmland.

COMMENTS:

There are no agricultural resources in or adjacent to the project area.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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III. AIR QUALITY.

Would the project*:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan or regulation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations (e.g., children, the elderly, individuals with compromised respiratory or immune systems)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

* Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.

COMMENTS:

There are no air quality issues raised by this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

Would the project:

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a sensitive, candidate, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by §404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

Proposed trail will route pedestrian traffic into an area that was traditionally accessed by motorized vehicles. Change in use pattern may result in increased disturbance to shoreline wildlife habitat, but effects are considered minor and negligible. Surveys and records of the project area indicate that there are no sensitive, candidate, or special status species nesting or occupying the project area. Trail construction through alkalai meadow/old Mono Lake bed may interrupt local hydrology. Rising Mono Lake level may impede upon trail at or below elevation of 6392 ft.

MITIGATION

- To ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed, an avian survey will be conducted prior to construction of the ADA trail that connects the portion of trail following route Z51 to the existing David Gaines Memorial Boardwalk. Nests will be flagged and avoided if found until young have fledged.
- Align trail to avoid alkalai meadow areas as much as possible.
- Construct elevated boardwalk in areas that are or will become wet with rising Lake level.
- Construct elevated causeway in areas that may become seasonally wet with rising Lake level.
- Construct "interpretive barrier" and education panels in strategic location to educate public about sensitive shoreline bird habitat.
- Monitor use trail development in shoreline habitat area and consider seasonal closure of area if proliferation of use trails occurs.

- Monitor all construction areas and roadways within the project area annually for at least five growing seasons and treat any noxious weeds found.
- In all areas where grading or soil disturbance will occur, stockpile topsoil and re-spread topsoil following slope grading and prior to re-seeding. Stockpiled soil will be protected from wind and water erosion.
- Local seeding guidelines will be used to determine detailed procedures and appropriate mixes. Preference is given to local seed sources, cultivars, and species available commercially. To avoid weed contamination, all seed purchases shall be certified weed-seed free.
- Before ground disturbing activities begin, identify and locate all equipment staging areas. Treat existing noxious weeds in these areas prior to staging of any equipment.
- Prior to construction the disturbance limits of the project will be flagged. Pop fencing, flagging or a staked rope line will be established to denote the limits of construction proximate to sensitive resource boundaries.

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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V. CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Would the project:

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| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in §15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to §15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

Known cultural resources include a circa 1930's to 1950's trash dump, the "Icebox Tufa", remaining footings of the Old Marina boat dock, and a granite retaining wall. The proposed trail alignment (for alternative 2 and 3) would have no adverse effects to any of the five sites identified in the Area of Potential Effect. Beneficial effects are expected for one site because the alternatives would eliminate vehicle access to the site, thus reducing potential effects of vandalism. All sites have been documented and evaluated by the US Forest Service. As assessment has been submitted to the California State Preservation Office (SHPO) and implementation of project will pend SHPO concurrence with US Forest Service historic site evaluations.

MITIGATION

Public education information focusing on the protection of historic resources in the project area will be part of the interpretive plan for the Lake Trail. Icebox Tufa will require posting of "no climbing" signs. Additional mitigation measures suggested by the California SHPO will be implemented, if any.

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS.

Would the project:

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area, or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iv) Landslides? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable, as a result of the project and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1997), creating substantial risks to life or property? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems, where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

The project would decrease both the area of bare, compacted soil, and the rate of erosion in the overall project area. The decrease in both would be small.

Soil types within the project area include:

- Soil 146 (Inyo Soil Survey, West Area) - part of the "Lakash-Brantel" family, a complex of "Lakash: Ashy-pumice, mesic Vitrandic Torriorthent" and "Brantel: Ashy, mesic Vitrandic Torrispsamments." A highly permeable soil with low productivity and low erosion hazard. This is a pumice soil that makes up 90% of the project area.
- Soil 380 (Inyo Soil Survey, West Area) – Vitrandic Torriorthents, ashy-Vitrandic Haplodurids complex (Old Lake Beaches). A soil that has moderate permeability and supports saltbrush and shadscale. It has low to moderate soil productivity and has a low erosion hazard with a pH of 8.0 to 8.5. This soil is found in the recessional lands near Mono Lake.

The sections of new trail would add about 1.0 acres of bare, compacted soil. Approximately 0.45 acres of compacted bare soil would be added to a currently relatively undisturbed hillside. Approximately 0.2 acres of bare, compacted soil would be added to create sinuosity along the upper part of route Z51. Approximately 0.5 acres of bare, compacted alkali soil would be

added by the section of new trail connecting road Z51 to the current David Gaines boardwalk. The new trail construction could cause minor soil loss during construction and from normal use, but the soil loss should be minimal with the proposed trail design.

The sections of road Z51 that would be made into a trail and areas of road that would be restored would have about 2.5 acres of reduction in bare, compacted soil. Reductions in width of the existing road from 10 feet to 5 feet would occur in road to trail conversion sections and restoration of road widths from 10 feet to zero feet would take place.

Although there would be more trail area, there would likely be less erosion. The trail would be less steep and straight, and would therefore be less susceptible to erosion. Eroding segments of the road would be repaired, and the trail would be built with sufficient water bars and checks to prevent all but minor soil erosion. Proper maintenance would ensure that erosion from this sinuous portion of the trail would be very low. Erosion should be reduced relative to the No Action alternative.

The total bare, compacted soil remaining along the existing Road Z51 would be more than 1.5 acres, anywhere from 1.6 to 1.8 acres, depending on the trail sinuosity.

The segment of trail connecting route Z51 to the David Gaines Boardwalk would result in around 0.05 acres more bare, compacted soil on the dry portion of the trail.

The designation of two parking spaces should not affect bare soil area or erosion, because the parking spaces will be in a currently disturbed area.

MITIGATION

The following best management practices will be utilized to minimize soil erosion and ensure the proper maintenance of hydrologic regimes:

- Soil disturbing activities will not be initiated during periods of heavy rain or excessively wet soils.
- Immediately following completion of approved ground disturbing activities and seeding, all areas of ground disturbance will be mulched with weed free straw, wood chips, bark, jute mat, etc.
- Check dams and sediment barriers (i.e., silt fence, weed-free hay bales, wattles, etc.) will be placed in all temporary erosion channels with minimum sufficient spacing to control runoff velocity and encourage sediment deposition.
- Water bars (12 to 18 inches deep) and cross drains will be constructed across all roads, trails, and other disturbed areas after seeding and fertilization at 50, 75, Or 100 foot-intervals as a function of slope angle, or as necessary, to disperse surface runoff. The frequency will be sufficient to prevent rill erosion and sediment delivery channel formation. Alternatively “parabolic slope water bars” may be constructed at the gradient beginning at the center of the road or trail surface and traversing outward to spill into undisturbed vegetation on both sides of the road or trail prism. Waterbars and outlets will be inspected seasonally, maintained and cleared of sediments at regular intervals.
- Prior to construction, a construction access plan will be developed detailing access routes to pertinent project elements.

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

Would the project:

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, substances, or waste into the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites, compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5, and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Be located in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires, including areas where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

There are no hazardous materials issues associated with this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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VII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY.

Would the project:

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Substantially degrade water quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map, or other flood hazard delineation map? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Place structures that would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from flooding, including flooding resulting from the failure of a levee or dam? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

The new trail would be designed and built to engineering standards, with a low gradient and water control structures to prevent substantial erosion.

The boardwalk segment of the connector trail, while very slightly reducing the extent of lakeside riparian vegetation, would not affect hydrology. The boardwalk would be raised and therefore would allow unimpeded movement of groundwater and surface water.

The proposed project would not affect water quality post-construction. The only water in the project area is Mono Lake and new trail construction remains about 500 feet from the current lake shore. New trail construction would skirt the higher

elevation sections of an alkalai meadow and will use elevated boardwalk where necessary to maintain riparian or wetland function. Reconstruction of boardwalk on the existing David Gaines ground-level boardwalk will result in short-term impacts to water quality during construction, but will improve water quality and wetland function over time, as the new elevated boardwalk will prevent visitors from straying off the boardwalk into the sensitive wetland and allow surface and subsurface water to flow more freely in the wetland and between the rising/falling Lake and adjacent wetland area.

The construction of a new Sweet Smelling Toilet should not affect water quality, soil quality, or erosion. The toilet will be placed in a previously disturbed area, and because it is a vault toilet that will be pumped, will not allow waste to enter soil, surface water or groundwater.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING.

Would the project:

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with the applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

The project complies with both the US Forest Service's "Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Management Plan" and the California State Parks "Operations Management Plan." Both documents provide management direction for land development and recreation management in the Mono Basin.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
X. MINERAL RESOURCES.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that is or would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

There are no mineral resource issues associated with this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
XI. NOISE.				
Would the project:				
a) Generate or expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in a local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Generate or expose people to excessive groundborne vibrations or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project (above levels without the project)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project, in excess of noise levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

Heavy equipment used for restoration, rehab, and construction will be used during construction period. Diesel engines, hammers, and other motorized equipment may cause noise in the project area.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

Population and housing issues will not be affected by this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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XII. PUBLIC SERVICES.

Would the project:

a) Result in significant environmental impacts from construction associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

Fire and police protection in the project area are provided for by the US Forest Service and California State Parks. Other public services will not be affected by this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
XIV. RECREATION.				
Would the project:				
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS:

Other nearby facilities will not be affected by this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC.

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Cause a substantial increase in traffic, in relation to existing traffic and the capacity of the street system (i.e., a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Exceed, individually or cumulatively, the level of service standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Cause a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, that results in substantial safety risks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Contain a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or a dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment) that would substantially increase hazards? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Result in inadequate parking capacity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

There is no expectation that traffic patterns in this area will change.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Exceed wastewater treatment restrictions or standards of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources or are new or expanded entitlements needed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Result in a determination, by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project, that it has adequate capacity to service the project's anticipated demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations as they relate to solid waste? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

There are no utilities or service systems that would be impacted by this project.

MITIGATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probably future projects?) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on humans, either directly or indirectly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS:

Potential impacts to shoreline bird habitat and alkalai meadow can be mitigated as mentioned in section IV.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures would be implemented by DPR and USFS as part of the Mono Lake Trail Project within the California Tufa State Reserve and Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area:

Aesthetics

- Natural colors and materials will be used whenever possible.
- Disturbed areas will be planted with native vegetation.
- Interpretive panels should be designed to reduce glare and compliment the natural colors and textures of the project area.
- The interpretive barrier and boardwalk should be constructed with materials that are context sensitive to the Scenic Area.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- Soil disturbing activities will not be initiated during periods of heavy rain or excessively wet soils.
- Immediately following completion of approved ground disturbing activities and seeding, all areas of ground disturbance will be mulched with weed free straw, wood chips, bark, jute mat, etc.
- Check dams and sediment barriers (i.e., silt fence, weed-free hay bales, wattles, etc.) will be placed in all temporary erosion channels with minimum sufficient spacing to control runoff velocity and encourage sediment deposition.
- Water bars (12 to 18 inches deep) and cross drains will be constructed across all roads, trails, and other disturbed areas after seeding and fertilization at 50, 75, Or 100 foot-intervals as a function of slope angle, or as necessary, to disperse surface runoff. The frequency will be sufficient to prevent rill erosion and sediment delivery channel formation. Alternatively “parabolic slope water bars” may be constructed at the gradient beginning at the center of the road or trail surface and traversing outward to spill into undisturbed vegetation on both sides of the road or trail prism. Waterbars and outlets will be inspected seasonally, maintained and cleared of sediments at regular intervals.
- Prior to construction, a construction access plan will be developed detailing access routes to pertinent project elements.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- Equipment will be cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside of parkboundaries. All contaminated water, sludge, spill residue, or other hazardous compounds will be disposed of outside park boundaries, at a lawfully permitted or authorized destination.

Native Plants and Noxious Weeds

- Monitor all construction areas and roadways within the project area annually for at least five growing seasons and treat any noxious weeds found.

- In all areas where grading or soil disturbance will occur, stockpile topsoil and re-spread topsoil following slope grading and prior to re-seeding. Stockpiled soil will be protected from wind and water erosion.
- Local seeding guidelines will be used to determine detailed procedures and appropriate mixes. Preference is given to local seed sources, cultivars, and species available commercially. To avoid weed contamination, all seed purchases shall be certified weed-seed free.
- Before ground disturbing activities begin, identify and locate all equipment staging areas. Treat existing noxious weeds in these areas prior to staging of any equipment.
- Prior to construction the disturbance limits of the project will be flagged. Pop fencing, flagging or a staked rope line will be established to denote the limits of construction proximate to sensitive resource boundaries.

Wildlife

- An “interpretive barrier” will be constructed to act as a deterrent for those who consider access to the shoreline via the user-created trail network and as a venue for education and interpretation.
- Education materials will be in the form of interpretive panels designed to raise awareness about the needs of the area wildlife and deter visitors from leaving the established trail. Pictures of muddy shoes lost in the alkali muck and nesting shoreline birds will be used to illustrate the reasons why visitors should not travel away from the trail.
- User trails in the sensitive wetland area will be monitored by annually photographing the condition and extent of user trails in the area. If it is determined that visitors are not respecting the voluntary “closure” of the wetland area, the Forest Service and California State Parks reserve the right to establish a seasonal closure of the area through appropriate legal mechanisms.