3.6 RECREATION

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project on recreation within MTRP. The evaluation is based on field observations, a review of maps of MTRP and the MTRP Master Plan, and discussions with park rangers.

3.6.1 Existing Conditions

MTRP provides numerous opportunities for recreation, including the use of utility roads and easements. Over 40 miles of roads and trails within MTRP are available to hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. In addition to hosting utility corridors for water, sewer, electricity, telephone, and gas, and providing roads and trails, MTRP provides natural open space for the support of native plant and animal species. The project area is used mostly for passive recreation with limited fencing and signage to protect sensitive resources.

The project area is within the West Fortuna Mountain portion of the MTRP, which consists of the western portion of the park that is located adjacent to the Tierrasanta neighborhood and extends southward towards Mission Gorge Road and the Navajo and San Carlos neighborhoods. Travel is limited to existing roads and trails, which are designated for hiking only, hiking and biking, or hiking, biking, and equestrian use. Typical recreational use of this portion of the park consists of walking, dog walking, jogging, running, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, nature study, photography, and the general enjoyment of natural open space. The terrain consists of a series of ridges and valleys, with the San Diego River flowing through the deepest valley, Mission Gorge.

Access points to MTRP within the project area, from north to south, are generally limited to Portobelo Drive, Corte Playa Catalina, Seda Drive, Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, Calle de Vida, and Mission Gorge Road, although other informal access points are possible from adjacent residential areas. With the exception of Corte Playa Catalina, each of these access points can be used by authorized motor vehicles, which are limited to park rangers, park maintenance staff and contractors, law enforcement, fire protection, and utility providers with facilities within the park. While motor vehicles operate within the project area on a daily basis, the number of trips is typically low and vehicle speeds are limited to 15 mph.

3.6.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential impacts to recreation are based on applicable criteria in the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR §§15000-15387), Appendix G; and the thresholds established for the Water Authority’s Program Environmental Impact Report for the Regional Water Facilities Master Plan. A significant impact to recreation would occur if the project would:

- 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.
- Result in the direct disturbance or displacement of established recreation facilities
3.6.3 Impact Analysis

Would the project 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 project would reduce the use of portions of the West Fortuna Area of MTRP, which represents the western edge of the park, during construction where access points and trails would be closed to maintain visitor safety. However, because the regional park offers multiple access points and trails, the inaccessibility to this part of MTRP is not expected to substantially increase the use of existing neighborhood parks or other portions of MTRP. Furthermore, the maximum period of closure would be approximately 2 years, a duration that would be unlikely to result in physical deterioration to other portions of MTRP or other facilities due to a redirected demand for passive recreation in an open space setting. This impact would be less than significant.

Would the proposed project result in the direct disturbance or displacement of established recreation facilities?

The proposed project would result in the temporary closure of dirt roads and trails within the West Fortuna Area of MTRP. These dirt roads and trails are used for recreation on a daily basis and are established recreation facilities for walking, running, jogging, hiking, nature study, mountain biking, and equestrian use. Closure of park trails and access areas is anticipated to range from 3 months at the San Diego River crossing to 2 years at the Clairemont Mesa Boulevard staging area, FRS II site, and North and South Portals. Access to park trails and roads through construction areas and on some roads used for truck routes would be prohibited for the duration of construction. The Clairemont Mesa Boulevard and Portobelo Drive access routes would be closed while the Calle de Vida access route would be open with public access restricted only while trucks and equipment are present. Figure 3.6-1 provides a map of the existing roads and trails in MTRP. Figure 3.6-2 shows the proposed road and trail closures that would be required to protect public safety during project construction. Active construction areas would be fenced and access would be restricted to authorized personnel. This would result in the direct disturbance of a portion of MTRP, which is an established, regional recreational facility.

The direct impact to these recreational facilities would only occur during construction and would be limited to the extreme western part of the large regional park. Access to the park would be open during construction from many other points, including Mission Gorge Road at the Visitor’s Center and at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground, as well as Deerfield Street, Navajo Road, Barker Way, Mesa Road, Big Rock Road, and Mast Boulevard. All trails from these access points would be open, including the BMX Track at the Deerfield Loop. As illustrated in Figure 3.6-3, Calle de Vida access would be a limited use access route for oversized construction equipment, and would typically remain open to the public for recreational use during construction. The Clairemont Mesa and Portobello access would be closed during construction. However, an alternative Portobello access, Corte Playa Catalina, Seda Drive, and Calle de Vida would allow continued recreational access to the Fortuna Mountain portion of MTRP. In addition, the entrance at Mission Gorge Road and Jackson Drive and the hike and bike trail to the river would be open except for a 2-month period during construction of the San Diego River.
crossing. The Water Authority will continue to distribute community newsletters to residents within the 92124 Zip Code, MTRP staff, and other interested parties describing the project components, schedule, impacts to recreational uses, and suggested alternative park areas and trails that may be used for recreational purposes during construction. Direct impacts of the access point and trail closures would be adverse. However, the impacts would be less than significant due to the availability of other portions of the park for recreation and the limited duration of the project.

Secondary or indirect impacts to recreational uses of the park would result from the intrusion of construction noise and dust and a change in park aesthetics due to the construction activities. Mitigation measures related to dust control are described in more detail in Section 3.4, Air Quality. Mitigation measures related to construction noise are described in Section 3.5, Noise and Vibration. These secondary impacts would be adverse, but less than significant, due to the availability of other portions of the park for recreation and the limited duration of the project.

All existing roads and trails would be restored to their existing condition or better following construction. All road and trail restoration would be coordinated with the MTRP Senior Park Ranger. Because the proposed project would be almost entirely below ground, there would not be any long-term impacts to recreation.

3.6.4 Mitigation Measures

Impacts to recreation in MTRP would be adverse, but less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required. See Section 2.6.5 for a discussion of project design features that would be implemented to maintain access to the Fortuna Mountain area of MTRP during construction.

3.6.5 Residual Impacts after Mitigation

No residual impacts would occur.
Mission Trails Regional Park
Trail Map

Figure 3.6-1
Mission Trails Flow
Regulatory Structure II,
Pipeline Tunnel, and
Vent Demolition Project

Map Notes

MTRP Trails Map

Figure 3.6-1
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Potential Trail Closures During Construction

Map Notes
Date: Jan 9, 2006

Mission Trails Flow Regulatory Structure II, Pipeline Tunnel, and Vent Demolition Project

Legend
- TRAILS CLOSED DURING CONSTRUCTION
- WORK AREAS CLOSED DURING CONSTRUCTION
- TRAIL CLOSURE BARRIER AND SIGN
- JACKSON DRIVE CLOSURE APPROX. 3 MONTHS (SEPT-NOV)
- LIMITED ACCESS ROUTE/BARRIER AND SIGN (Typically open to public during construction)

Mission Trails Regional Park
Trail Map

Figure 3.6-2
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