

3.12 PUBLIC SAFETY AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project on public safety and hazardous materials. The public safety concerns related to the project would include potential facility accidents or failures associated with hazardous materials, increased public exposure to unsafe conditions/activities including use of and exposure to hazardous materials, and the increased risk of wildland fire. This evaluation is based on the Geotechnical Investigation Technical Memorandum 02 prepared by GeoLogic Associates (HDR 2005).

3.12.1 Existing Conditions

Hazardous Materials

San Diego County encompasses agricultural, commercial, and industrial development, as well as numerous military installations. The construction and operation of such development and the infrastructure to support it involves potential risk from historical and current use of hazardous materials, including fuel, pesticides, fertilizers, solvents, and other chemicals. For military installations where training exercises have taken place, unexploded artillery and other military debris, referred to as unexploded ordnance, may remain on and/or buried underneath the ground surface.

Facility Construction and Operation. During construction, diesel-fueled equipment would have to be maintained and fueled on site. Potentially hazardous materials associated with project construction include oil, fuel, and explosives for blasting. No chemicals would be stored at the FRS II facility. Since the water would be untreated, chlorine or ammonia would not be needed at the facility.

Unexploded Ordnance. The risk of unexploded ordnance exists at MTRP, as the park was once a part of former Camp Elliott. The Mission Trails Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) is roughly defined as the area north of the San Diego River, east of Tierrasanta, and south of Highway 52. The camp was used for artillery, anti-aircraft, and machine gun firing practice for more than 40 years. Munitions and ordnance remained on the property after the camp was closed in 1961. Since that time, over 5,000 ordnance items and nearly 25 tons of ordnance debris have been removed from Tierrasanta and MTRP. Surface and subsurface ordnance removal was conducted in the vicinity of the site during 1992-1995. During 2000-2003, the Corps concluded that the ordnance and explosives (OE) clearance completed in 1995 was still protective of public safety. A limited magnetometer survey to locate near-surface metallic objects performed in the geotechnical study work areas prior to subsurface investigation did not identify any metallic objects.

Wildfires

In October 2003, San Diego County experienced the worst firestorms in county history, which were second statewide only to the Oakland Hills Fire of 1991 in terms of damage. The hot, dry Santa Ana winds drove three major fire fronts: Cedar, Paradise, and Otay. The Cedar Fire, which swept across MTRP, burned more than 273,000 acres countywide, and nearly 30,000

acres in the City of San Diego (City of San Diego 2004). A large portion of the vegetation in MTRP burned in the 2003 Cedar Fire, and the areas of grasses, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and woodland vegetation are recovering. Thousands of structures were destroyed by the fire, including several Tierrasanta homes near the park that are being rebuilt or are currently under construction. Damage to Water Authority facilities within MTRP was limited to irrigation systems and combustible materials used for erosion control such as silt curtains and straw waddles. Based on a range of San Diego City Fire Department classifications for the Tierrasanta community, the fire hazard classification would be high (City of San Diego 2003).

3.12.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential public safety and hazardous materials impacts are based on applicable criteria in the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR §§15000-15387), Appendix G. A significant public safety and hazardous materials impacts would occur if the proposed project would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- Be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

3.12.3 Impact Analysis

Would the proposed project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed facilities would pose potential health and safety hazards to construction and maintenance workers, nearby residents, park users, and the environment. These impacts would be associated with the potential for spills on the construction site or along access roads, and improper disposal of hazardous materials. However, the Water Authority's *General Conditions and Standard Specifications* (Water Authority 2005) cover construction procedures for this kind of large infrastructure project. Safety measures that are part of the *General*

Conditions and Standard Specifications and measures that would be incorporated into the project plans and specifications are described in Section 2.6. These and other measures that would be incorporated into the plans and specifications for the project would reduce the risk of upsets during construction, including accidental explosions or releases of hazardous substances. Therefore, the impacts from typical hazardous materials and conditions during project construction would be less than significant.

Would the proposed project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

The proposed project is intended for the transport, storage, and regulation of flow of raw water. No chemicals would be used or stored at the FRS II site. Therefore, the impacts from hazardous materials used in project operation would be less than significant.

Would the proposed project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No schools are located or planned within one-quarter mile of the FRS II. The SDUSD owns the 12.78-acre property where the FRS II would be constructed, as well as a parcel at the intersection of Calle de Vida and Colina Dorada. Both parcels are managed by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department as part of MTRP. The School District does not have development plans for either parcel and it is anticipated that the School District would sell the parcel at the proposed FRS II site to the Water Authority prior to project construction. Therefore, there would not be an impact to existing or proposed schools.

Would the proposed project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

A site-specific hazardous materials survey has not been conducted for the FRS II site or the tunnel portal and shaft locations. MTRP was once part of Camp Elliott, a military training area, and has been identified as potentially having unexploded ordnance from the historic military use. Therefore, the impact of potential exposure of construction and maintenance workers to hazardous materials in the soil and/or unexploded ordnance would be significant (**Impact PS 1**).

Would the proposed project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The proposed project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. An emergency-only access gate and road from Seda Drive would allow for emergency crews to bypass construction equipment and haul trucks within MTRP to reach the FRS II site. The proposed stabilized crossing of the San Diego River would improve emergency response capabilities from Mission Gorge Road to areas north of the San Diego River. The ability to evacuate the Tierrasanta community, which would most likely be the result of a wildland fire, would not be compromised.

by the proposed project. An evacuation plan would be required for the construction site. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Would the proposed expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Activities associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project could increase the potential for accidental wildfires. Workers smoking cigarettes, sparks from equipment, welding, or other activities could increase the potential for fire ignition in MTRP during project construction. The western boundary of the project area encompasses dense residential development bordered by undeveloped ridges and valleys of the park. This area suffered the loss of several structures during the Cedar Fire in 2003. The potential for people or structures to be exposed to risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires due to project construction would be significant (**Impact PS 2**).

The risk of wildland fires from project operation would be negligible. The aboveground structures associated with the Water Authority's facilities within MTRP are made of concrete and steel and all vegetation is cleared within 6 feet of the structures or the fence line, whichever is farther. Future wildland fires within MTRP would not be likely to damage the proposed facilities. Long-term impacts would be less than significant.

3.12.4 Mitigation Measures

To mitigate the significant impacts of potential soil contamination and unexploded ordnance to construction workers, the Water Authority shall implement the following mitigation measures:

- PS 1-1** Before completion of final design plans and specifications, all proposed project construction areas shall be investigated to determine if there is a record of hazardous materials contamination (Phase I Environmental Site Assessment). If so, the Water Authority shall characterize the site(s) according to the nature and extent of soil contamination, and determine the need for further investigation and/or remediation of the soils conditions on the contaminated site.
- PS 1-2** If warranted, a Phase II investigation shall be conducted. The Phase II investigation shall, at a minimum, involve soil sampling. Should further investigation reveal high levels of hazardous materials in the site soils, mitigate health and safety risks according to County Department of Environmental Health and RWQCB regulations. This will include site-specific health and safety plans prepared prior to construction.
- PS 1-3** Prior to the start of construction, a qualified contractor shall survey all project construction sites, including access roads in MTRP, for the presence of unexploded ordnance. The survey shall include identification of potential unexploded ordnance locations and a determination of the presence or absence of unexploded ordnance in the area. Once the survey is completed, a qualified contractor shall arrange for the removal of any unexploded ordnance found. In addition, the unexploded ordnance

contractor shall provide training, as needed, to construction contractors related to the identification of unexploded ordnance.

To mitigate the potential wildland fire risk during construction, the Water Authority shall implement the following mitigation measures:

- PS 2-1** Prior to approval of final design plans and specifications, a Fire Prevention Program shall be developed in consultation with the Fire Marshal for each component of the proposed project. The program shall address fire prevention for the construction period and for long-term maintenance activities.
- PS 2-2** Prior to completion of construction, an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) shall be developed by the Water Authority (facility operator) in coordination with the County Office of Emergency Services, the County Environmental Health Department, and the appropriate Fire Protection District.

3.12.5 Residual Impacts after Mitigation

No residual impacts would remain after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.

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