

3.13 Recreation

This section identifies existing recreational opportunities within the Lake Perris State Recreation Area (SRA), analyzes potential impacts to recreational opportunities and facilities associated with the development of the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the significance of any identified impacts.

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has developed the land around Lake Perris into a large and widely popular State Park called the Lake Perris SRA. Attendance at the Lake Perris SRA in 2012 was 630,092 visitors and average attendance from 1996 to 2012 was 898,393 visitors per year (CA State Parks, 2013). Water-oriented recreation activities at Lake Perris SRA include fishing, boating, swimming, water skiing, wind surfing, scuba diving, and jet skiing. Onshore-oriented recreation in the park includes picnicking, hiking, camping, rock climbing, bicycling, horseback riding, and sunbathing. These primary activities are supported by basic facilities such as entry control, parking, restrooms, and orientation information (display panels/water stations).

The Lake Perris Fairgrounds are located west of the Lake Perris SRA and north of the Ramona Expressway in unincorporated Riverside County; the Fairgrounds encompass approximately 108 acres. The Fairgrounds are owned and operated by the 46th District Agricultural Association (DAA), a state agency created in 1927 that receives funds and policy oversight from both the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Division of Fairs and Expositions. According to the DAA, approximately 600,000 people visit the Fairgrounds annually (DAA, 2013). Within the Fairgrounds property, the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park, the El Toro Huaco Rodeo, and general parking areas are closest to the Ramona Expressway and the proposed project area (DAA, 2013). The DAA estimate approximately 72,500 visitors annually attend the motocross or participate in events at the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park (DAA, 2013) (see Figure 3.10-2).

Recreational Opportunities

SRA Segment

Recreational opportunities within the project's impact areas are limited. Hiking, biking, and horse trails exist along Bernasconi Hills and below the dam. Only those trails located below the dam would be impacted by the proposed project construction and implementation and would be closed for the duration of the construction activities for the SRA Segment. All other recreational opportunities at Lake Perris SRA, including boating, fishing, water sports, camping, and climbing at Big Rock would not be impacted by the proposed project.

Fairgrounds Segment

Construction and implementation of the proposed project would only impact the furthestmost southern portion of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds. During construction, portions of available

parking areas and the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motorcross Park would be closed to the public (see Figure 3.10-2). DWR will coordinate with the Fairgrounds during the construction period and no active construction would occur during the Fairgrounds' largest event, the Southern California Fair. In addition, once constructed, the channel within the Fairgrounds Segment would be designed as a dual-use facility and would allow for parking and motocross activities to be reinstated post-construction.

Western Segment

The Western Segment is composed of a Department of Water Resources (DWR) right-of-way (ROW) that do not allow for public access. No recreational areas would be impacted by project construction or implementation along this segment.

3.13.2 Regulatory Framework

The following agencies have regulatory authority over recreation areas in or near the proposed project site.

State

California Department of Water Resources

In 1974, after the completion of Perris Dam, the DWR and the DPR entered into an agreement to transfer possession and control of certain real property at Lake Perris from DWR to DPR. The agreement allowed DPR to develop recreational opportunities pursuant to Chapter 10, Part 3, Division 6, of the California Water Code, commonly referred to as the Davis-Dolwig Act. The agreement also states that the use of the property by DPR is subordinate to the use by DWR for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the State Water Resources Development System.

DWR owns and operates the Lake Perris SRA and its water and public-safety-related needs supersede the recreational needs of California State Parks. DWR is responsible for managing and protecting California's water supplies and operates the State Water Project (SWP), of which Lake Perris is a terminus. The California State Water Project is a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants, and pumping plants and is responsible for serving up to two-thirds of California's population with potable water. Lake Perris is the final reservoir of the East Branch of the SWP, and its primary use is as a water storage facility.

California State Parks

The Lake Perris SRA is part of the system of California State Parks. Established in the early 1970s, the area surrounds Lake Perris, the southernmost reservoir in the SWP. It is managed by DPR, which was created within the California Resources Agency and is charged to "provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation" (California State Parks, 2015). The California Code of Regulations and the Public Resources Code charge California State Parks with accomplishing its mission through a legal mandate to "administer, protect, provide for recreational opportunity, and develop the State Park System; to interpret the values of the State

Park System to the public; to operate the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program; to administer the California Historical Resources Protection Program; and to administer federal and state grants and bond funds to local agencies” (California State Parks, 2004). DPR manages 280 park units that include terrestrial and marine reserves, state beaches, wilderness areas, historic structures, and off-highway vehicle parks and that cover 1.4 million acres, 280 miles of coast, 625 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites and 3,000 miles of multi-use trails.

46th District Agricultural Association

The Lake Perris Fairgrounds is operated and managed by the 46th DAA, a state agency that receives fiscal and policy oversight from both the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Division of Fairs and Expositions. The 46th DAA is a sub-agency of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and is responsible for the management of the Southern California Fair at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds.

3.13.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

This section addresses potential impacts of the proposed project to recreational facilities in the project area. The impact significance criteria are based on guidance provided by Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines regarding significant environmental effects. Appendix G contains sample questions that are intended to encourage thoughtful assessment of impacts. Potential impacts not listed in Appendix G must also be considered. For this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical impact on the environment

Impact Analysis

Impact 3.13-1: The project could have a significant impact if it would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.

Implementation of the project would not promote the development of residential land uses that would increase the use of existing neighborhood and/or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that it would cause deterioration. The project would result in temporary removal and redevelopment of the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park located in the southeast corner of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds. However, the conveyance facility through the Fairgrounds Segment is being designed specifically for a dual-use purpose, allowing parking and motocross activities within the channel. Nevertheless, the motocross facility at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds would not be in operation during construction. This may temporarily disperse users of the motocross park to other nearby facilities. The nearest motocross facilities to the project site include the Milestone

Ranch Motocross located at 12685 Holly Street in Riverside, Perris Raceway located at 1205 Burton Road (8 miles south of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds), and the Lake Elsinore Motorsports Park located at 31919 Cereal Street in Lake Elsinore (approximately 20 miles south of Lake Perris Fairgrounds). Perris Raceway has two separate tracks, while Lake Elsinore Motocross Park has five tracks. If dispersal does occur during the temporary closure of the motocross facility, those facilities are operated and maintained through entrance fees. Increase in users at a facility would directly increase profit and the operation and maintenance budgets of these facilities accordingly. In addition, dispersal would be temporary, during construction only. Once construction is completed, motocross activities at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds are expected to return to normal operations and other facilities would return to their expected visitorship quantities. Therefore, impacts would be considered less than significant.

Significance Determination: Less than Significant.

Impact 3.13-2: The project could have a significant impact if it would include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical impact on the environment.

The project does not include new recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. The project would temporarily impact the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park. Because other recreational opportunities exist near the Lake Perris Fairgrounds, the removal of the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park would not result in the construction of new facilities that would result in impacts. Other motocross facilities are available in the area, including the Milestone Ranch Motocross located at 12685 Holly Street in Riverside (approximately 20 miles south of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds), Perris Raceway located at 1205 Burton Road (8 miles south of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds), and the Lake Elsinore Motorsports Park located at 31919 Cereal Street in Lake Elsinore (approximately 20 miles south of Lake Perris Fairgrounds). Furthermore, any new facilities constructed in the region would be driven by local demand and subject to local approval.

After the emergency release facility is completed, redesigning and building the motocross facility would occur within the Lake Perris Fairgrounds (existing project footprint). Temporary construction impacts, including air emissions, noise, and traffic, are accounted for in this EIR. Additional facilities are outside the scope of this EIR, and prior to constructing new additional facilities on-site, the Lake Perris Fairgrounds would be responsible for assessing potential environmental impacts of any new recreational facilities. Since the proposed project would not result in the need for new recreational facilities to be constructed on- or off-site, impacts would be considered less than significant.

Significance Determination: Less than Significant.

3.13.4 References

- California 46th District Agriculture Association. Letter to Department of Water Resources. November 14, 2013.
- California 46th District Agriculture Association. Letter to Department of Water Resources. April 10, 2014.
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR). *Lake Perris Dam Project*. 2011. Available at www.water.ca.gov/lakeperris. Accessed May 8, 2013.
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR). "State Water Project: Lake Perris." 2010.
- California State Parks. *About Us*. 2015. Available at www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=91. Accessed January 24, 2015.
- California State Parks, Department of Parks and Recreation. *California State Parks Performance Management Report*. 2004.