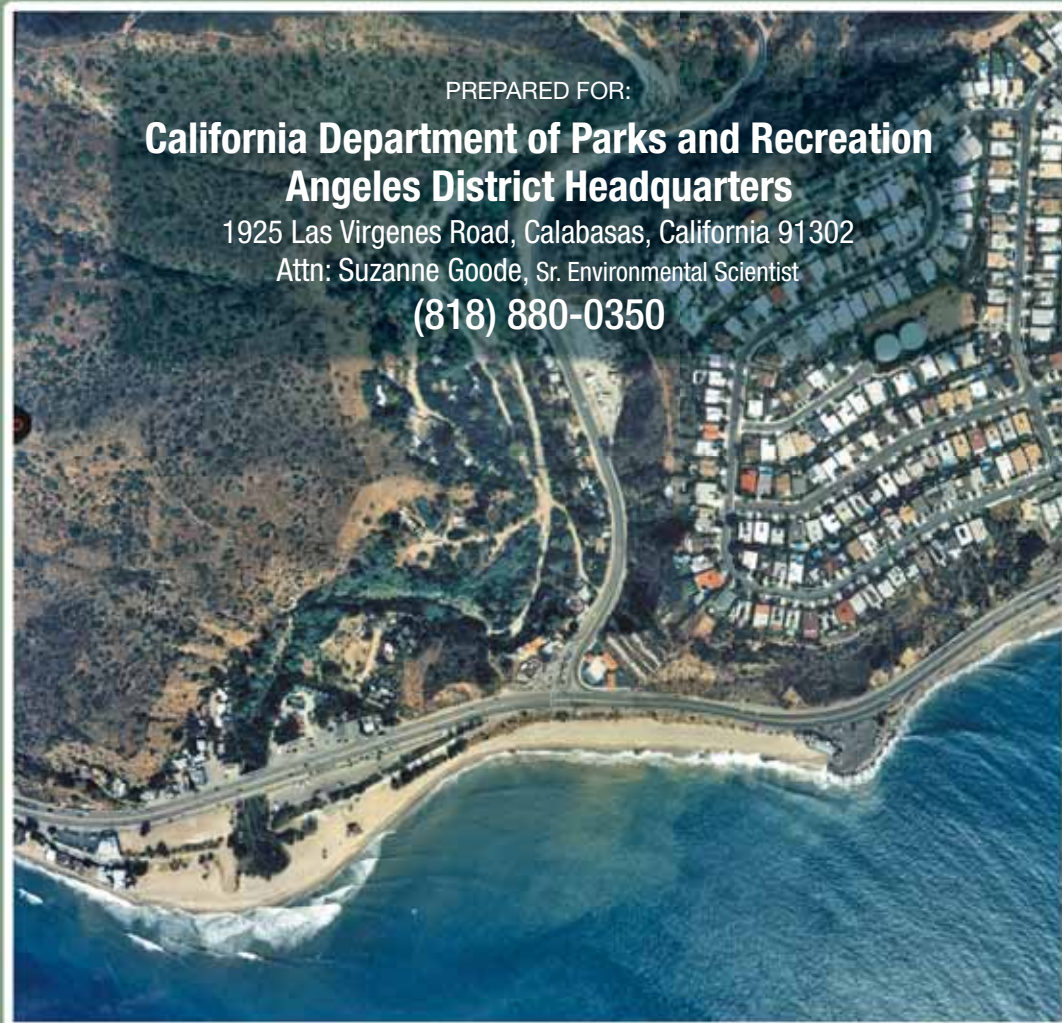


MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The Rodeo Grounds Berm

Removal and Restoration Project



PREPARED FOR:

**California Department of Parks and Recreation
Angeles District Headquarters**

1925 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas, California 91302

Attn: Suzanne Goode, Sr. Environmental Scientist

(818) 880-0350

PREPARED BY:



Envicom Corporation

28328 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, California 91301

September 2006

THE RODEO GROUNDS BERM REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PROJECT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Prepared For:

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
ANGELES DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS**

1925 Las Virgenes Road

Calabasas, California 91302

Contact: Suzanne Goode, Sr. Environmental Scientist
(818) 880-0350 Ext. 113

Prepared By:

ENVICOM CORPORATION

28328 Agoura Road

Agoura Hills, California 91301

September 2006

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT: RODEO GROUNDS BERM REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PROJECT

LEAD AGENCY: California Department of Parks and Recreation

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS: The Initial Study for this Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review at:

- Angeles District Headquarters, California Department of Parks & Recreation
1925 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, CA. 91302
- Los Angeles County Malibu Public Library
23519 Civic Center Way
Malibu, CA. 90265
- Pacific Palisades Library
861 Alma Real Drive
Pacific Palisades, CA. 90272
- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
122 North Topanga Canyon Boulevard
Topanga, California 90290

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal and Restoration Project is proposed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The project is intended to restore the natural floodplain, creek channel, and sediment transport systems at the southern end of Topanga Creek, approximately 2,500 feet upstream from the Pacific Ocean. The project consists of the removal of a berm that was installed by the former tenants of the Rodeo Grounds homes in order to divert flood waters from Topanga Creek and protect the residences.

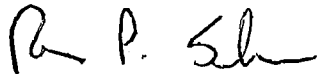
The project's total area of direct impact encompasses an estimated 1.81 acres, which includes the 80,000 square foot (1.8 acres) of berm and 0.01 acres of delineated wetlands. These acreages are intended as maximum areas of impact for CEQA analysis purposes. As the purpose of the project is to benefit Topanga Creek, these impacts are temporary, and the restoration effort is designed to reduce the affected areas of waters and wetlands to the most minimal amount necessary to accomplish the berm removal and restoration process.

An additional presently disturbed 12.4 acres will benefit from the removal of some of the exotic vegetation associated with the former residences as well as removal of the berm itself. This area has been disturbed since the 1920's and has little present habitat value. Thus, removal of the berm will result in restoration of over 12 acres of floodplain, allow natural re-adjustment of the creek channel and restore natural sediment transport regimes. These actions are anticipated to result in direct benefits to endangered steelhead trout that will be able to then access 3.3 miles of suitable habitat that is seasonally restricted due to the sub-surface flows associated with the berm.

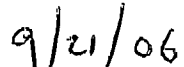
A copy of the Initial Study is attached. Questions or comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration may be addressed to:

Suzanne Goode
California Department of Parks & Recreation
1925 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, CA. 91302

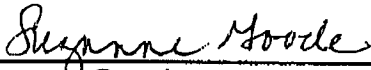
Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the proposed project and finds that these documents reflect the independent judgment of DPR. DPR, as lead agency, also confirms that the project mitigation measures detailed in these documents are feasible and will be implemented as stated in the Negative Declaration.



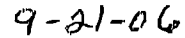
Ron P. Schafer
District Superintendent



Date



Suzanne Goode
Environmental Coordinator



Date

Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal and Restoration Project
Topanga State Park
California Department of Parks & Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact", as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None |

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that, although the original scope of the proposed project **COULD** have had a significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** or its functional equivalent will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated impact" on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.

I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.

Suzanne Goode
Suzanne Goode
Environmental Coordinator

9-21-06
Date

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal and Restoration Project is proposed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR). The project is intended to restore the natural floodplain, creek channel, and sediment transport systems at the southern end of Topanga Creek, approximately 2,500 feet upstream from the Pacific Ocean, as shown in **Figure 1, Regional Location Map**. The project consists of the removal of a berm that was installed by the former tenants of the Rodeo Grounds homes in order to divert flood waters from Topanga Creek and protect the residences.

The project's total area of direct impact encompasses an estimated 1.81 acres, which includes the 80,000 square foot (1.8 acres) of berm and 0.01 acres of delineated wetlands. These acreages are intended as maximum areas of impact for CEQA analysis purposes. As the purpose of the project is to benefit Topanga Creek, these impacts are temporary, and the restoration effort is designed to reduce the affected areas of waters and wetlands to the most minimal amount necessary to accomplish the berm removal and restoration process.

As part of a related project not covered by this Mitigated Negative Declaration, an additional presently disturbed 12.4 acres adjacent to the berm will benefit from the removal of all the former residences. This area has been disturbed since the 1920's and has little present habitat value. Thus, removal of the berm will result in restoration of over 12 acres of floodplain (the berm plus the adjacent disturbed habitat), allow natural re-adjustment of the creek channel and restore natural sediment transport regimes. These actions are anticipated to result in direct benefits to endangered steelhead trout which will be able to then access 3.3 miles of suitable habitat that is now seasonally restricted due to the sub-surface flows associated with the berm. **Figure 2, Project Impact Areas**, illustrates the entire project area, including the 1.81 acres that will be directly impacted by the project.

Project Location

The Rodeo Berm Removal and Restoration Project is located in an unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County in the watershed in Topanga State Park north of Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and east of the Tuna Canyon Significant Ecological Area. Specifically, the project site is in and around Topanga Creek, which is adjacent to (and on the west side of) Topanga Canyon Boulevard, just north of PCH, which is also designated as California State Highway 1 (refer to Figures 1 and 2). Access to the Rodeo Grounds area is currently provided regionally by PCH and Topanga Canyon Boulevard and locally by Rodeo Grounds Road, which is an unpaved roadway currently traversing the streambed and the berm. The proposed project site lies within the Eastern 1/2 of the Northwestern 1/4 of a projection of fractional Section 32 located in Township 1 North and Range 16 West, extending into the Rancho/Land Grant of Boca de Santa Monica, as referenced from the San Bernardino Baseline depicted on the Topanga, California, 7.5' x 7.5' United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map sheet.

Surrounding Land Uses

Land uses in the vicinity of the site include the Topanga Canyon Boulevard roadway, single family residences (and assorted fences, dirt roadways and outbuildings), commercial uses (along PCH) and open space. The residences and commercial uses are now within state ownership, and are planned for removal, excepting historic buildings, which will be retained and maintained as part of the state parklands. Open space in the surrounding area includes other portions of the state ownership, as well as vacant hillsides north of PCH (including Topanga State Park to the north and east and the Tuna Canyon Significant Ecological Area to the west), as well as beaches to the south.



Source: Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. Aerial Photograph, I.K. Curtis, 1997.

Project Background and Context

Construction of the berm occurred without permits, so the details of its construction are not fully known. Based upon the current project geotechnical investigations and general observations, the berm is believed to have been constructed in at least two stages. The current Rodeo Grounds Berm was constructed in 1969 after a major flood event to protect residences living immediately downstream of Topanga Creek. Then, additional fill material (road spoils from throughout the watershed) was placed on the berm after another flood event in 1980, raising the berm higher. According to local residents, the sources of at least a portion of the berm fill material, asphalt, may have been imported from Topanga Canyon Boulevard and a Lincoln Boulevard road demolition/expansion project in Santa Monica.

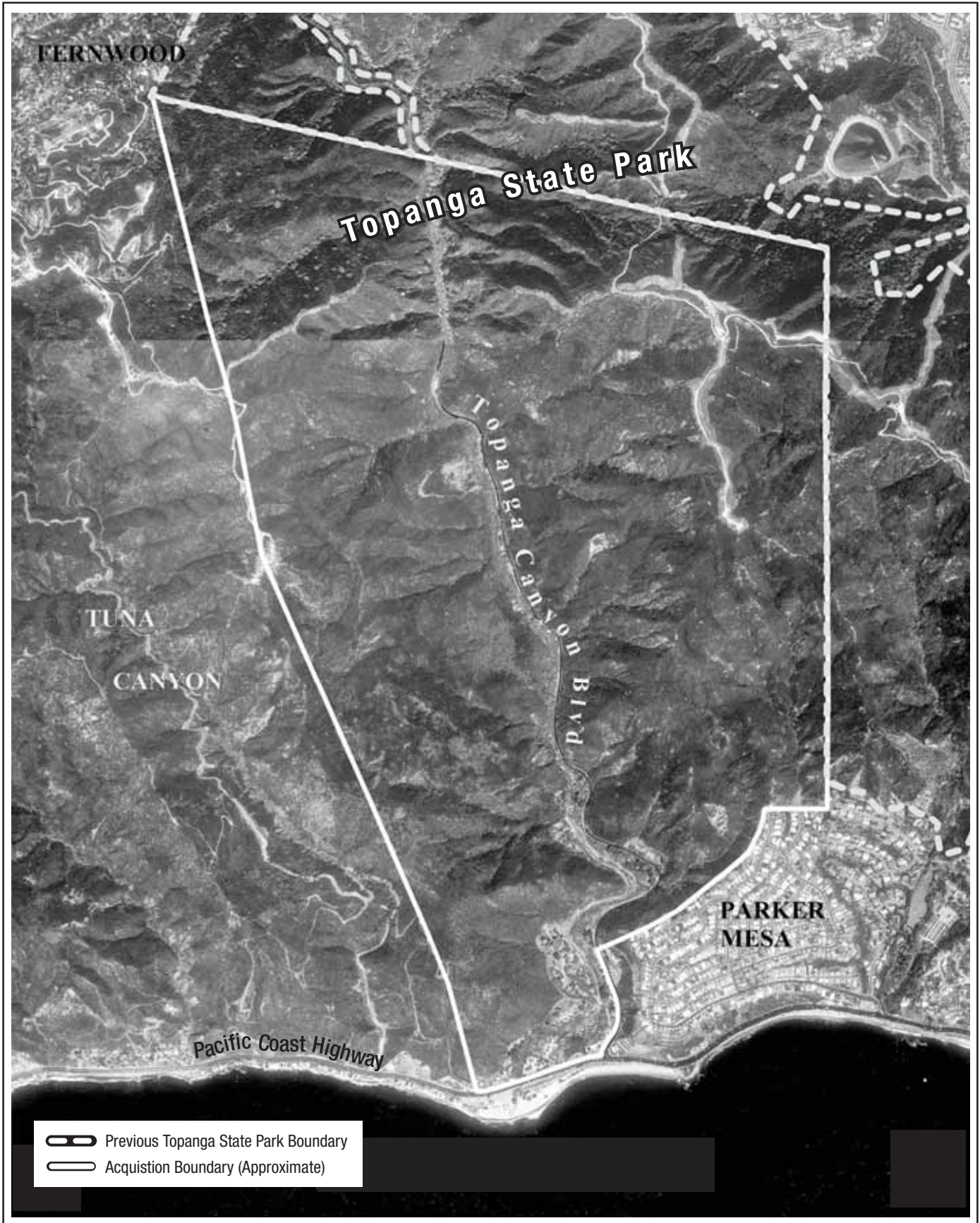
In August 2001, the California Department of Parks and Recreation acquired 1,659 acres adjacent to the southwest boundary of Topanga State Park. This property was acquired in order to “protect and preserve this ecologically important area as open space and recreation land. It will open to public access an area that contains preserved grasslands, meadows, wetlands, creeks, live oaks, cliffs and canyons that will provide extensive recreational opportunities for the Los Angeles region”.¹ Since the project area was incorporated into Topanga State Park in 2001, the Rodeo Grounds structures have been slated for removal, with some already removed. As determined by legal agreement, the tenants of the area known as Rodeo Grounds were vacated by February 2006. Following departure of the tenants, California State Parks is responsible for removing the residences. It is anticipated that all the structures currently protected by the berm will be removed prior to the start of this project. Environmental review for these demolitions occurred in a document released by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Southern Service Center on July 5, 2002 [The Topanga State Park: Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Final Interim Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report, State Clearinghouse Number (SCH #) 2001121028].

The Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal and Restoration Project MND was first circulated in January 2006 for public review and comment. Relevant issues raised in the comment letters have been addressed herein and are also attached as **Appendix A**. The MND is being recirculated in order to adequately address all CEQA-related requirements.

General Environmental Setting

The project site is located within the Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Final Interim Management Plan area, shown in **Figure 3, Topanga State Park Acquisition Area**. Topanga Creek is the dominant natural feature of the property as it runs over two miles through the heart of the acquisition. A riparian corridor of varying widths and gradients parallels both sides of Topanga Creek, and is composed of sycamore woodlands, arroyo willow woodlands, and white alder woodlands. The southernmost end of this corridor is the flattest and widest, and includes 2.2 acres of remnant estuary and lagoon habitat, as well as riparian woodlands and fresh water marshes. The majority of the acquisition property (approximately 1,659 acres) consists of steep slopes covered by chaparral. Several species listed as endangered or threatened occur, or have the potential to occur, within the newly acquired lands. Native Americans were present in the canyon and surrounding areas in prehistoric times, particularly at the creek’s coastal interface. Historic developments began during the early 1900s. A few existing structures, mostly along Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), are considered historically significant. However, these structures lie outside the project area.

¹ Interim Management Plan EIR, SCH # 2001121028, 2002.



Source: California Department of Parks and Recreation

Project Characteristics

Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal

The berm on the western bank of Topanga Creek is trapezoidal in shape, measuring approximately 1,000 feet in length and varying in width between 40 to 100 feet. Total surface area of the Rodeo Grounds Berm is, approximately 80,000 square feet, with a height ranging from 12 to 14.5 feet. The estimated volume of the berm is 520,000 cubic feet (or 19,000 cubic yards), with a total weight of approximately 26,000 tons consisting of soils and other fill materials, such as asphalt, which will all be removed and disposed of with implementation of the project. The eastern bank of the berm is covered with concrete and boulders for erosion control. Preliminary soil testing indicates that an estimated 17,000 tons of the berm qualify as non-Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) California hazardous waste, due to lead contamination. The remaining 9,000 tons of fill materials qualifies as non-hazardous material. Therefore, fill materials will likely be transported to and disposed of at different landfill facilities, because not all landfills accept contaminated, hazardous waste. The proposed area of restoration, prepared by GeoPentech, is shown in **Figure 4, Approximate Final Grade Map**.

Topanga Creek and Habitat Restoration

The planned restoration effort, which will follow the berm removal phase, will rely on natural restoration of the Creek alignment. Once the berm impediment is removed (along with removal of homes and other structures under a separate project), the Creek will be allowed to "right itself" to its former channel as defined by the remnant bank on the west side. Removal of exotic vegetation will restore the natural creek channel habitats, restore all disturbed acreage (including wetland/ riparian floodplain), allow removal of storm-generated sediment that has built up, and restore above-surface creek flow. Ultimately, the project is expected to provide summer rearing habitat and improve over-winter habitat and critical passage links for the endangered southern steelhead trout between the main stem of Topanga Creek and the ocean. Other terrestrial and aquatic wildlife will benefit, as well.

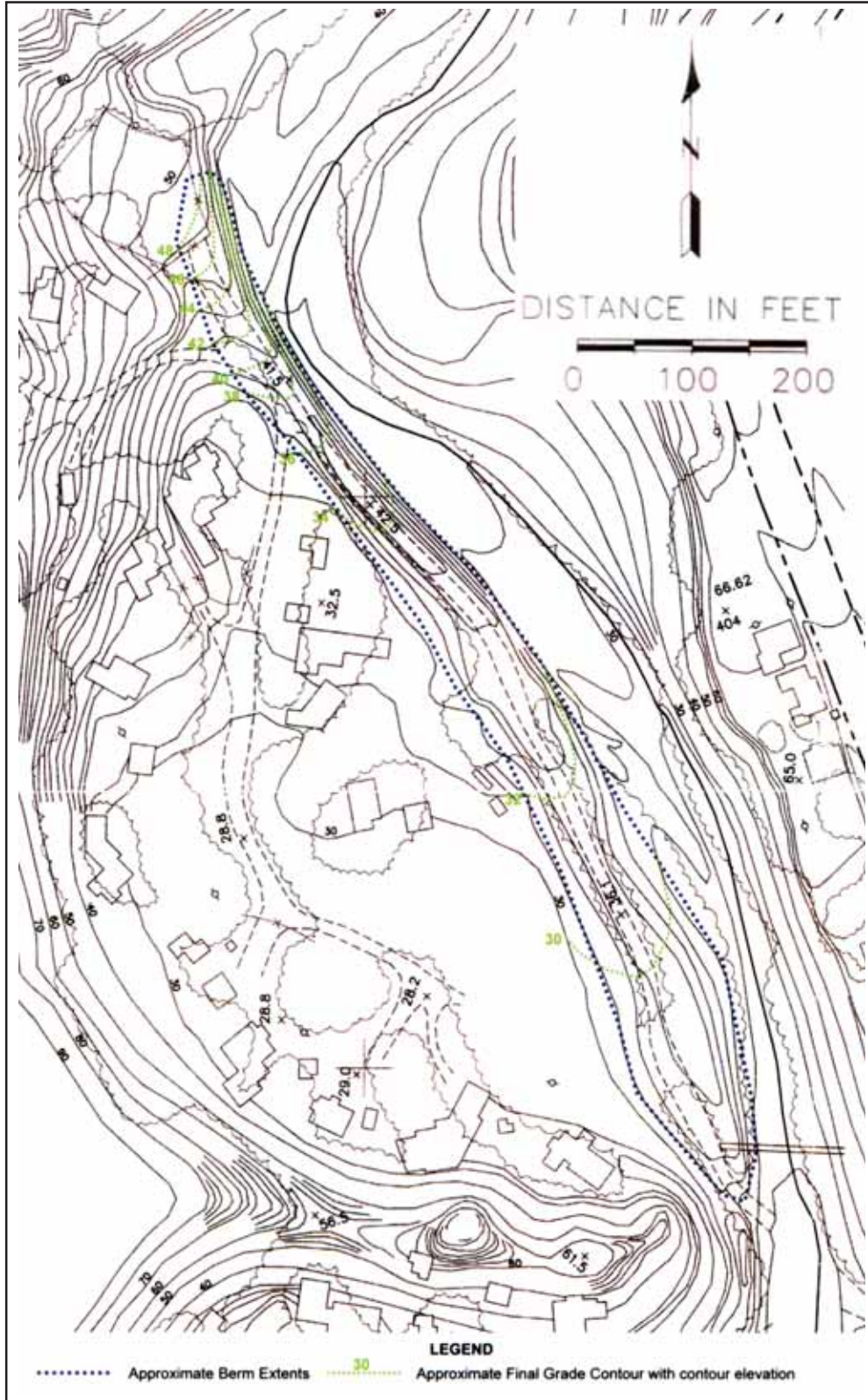
Other Aspects of the Project

The project does not include any hardscape or park facilities. Rather, its sole purpose is removing the berm and allowing for restoration of the natural environment in this location.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the proposed Rodeo Berm Removal and Restoration Project are to:

1. Remove the lead contaminated constructed earthen berm at the Rodeo Grounds site (which diverts the natural flow of Topanga Creek), to allow for return of the site to a natural condition as the creek channel naturally adjusts itself following the fill removal.
2. Reduce unnatural Creek channelization allowing for natural dissipation of stream flow energy over a wider, more natural floodplain and reduce scour downstream.
3. Implement a restoration and revegetation plan for native trees and restore the natural creek geomorphology and hydrologic and hydraulic regimes.
4. Provide improved habitat for area wildlife on-site, including high quality habitat for the endangered southern steelhead trout.
5. Return a portion of the state ownership to natural conditions, which will enhance the overall environmental value of the property and improve the quality of the public's environmental experience (aesthetics, views).
6. Indirectly provide for educational opportunities pertaining to the creek restoration and the steelhead trout, as well as other aspects of the natural environment at the site, and in the surrounding area.



Source: GeoPentech, April 2005

7. Continue responsible stewardship in the operation of Topanga State Park, protect the public and the site's natural resources from hazardous conditions (safety, environmental health, and access to natural parkland).

Purpose and Intended Uses of the MND

The Mitigated Negative Declaration is intended to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for the project, which includes all project approvals and all actions that could result in a physical change to the environment. Project approvals include, but are not limited to the following:

- Army Corps of Engineers 404 Nationwide Permit No. 27
- California Coastal Commission Permit Approval
- California Department of Fish and Game 1600 Agreement
- Caltrans Transportation and Encroachment Permit Approval
- Regional Water Quality Control Board Approval

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers, except "No Impact", that are adequately supported by the information sources cited. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact does not apply to the project being evaluated (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on general or project-specific factors (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must consider the whole of the project-related effects, both direct and indirect, including off-site, cumulative, construction, and operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, the checklist answers must indicate whether that impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate when there is sufficient evidence that a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change may occur in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.
4. A "Mitigated Negative Declaration" (Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated) applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures, prior to declaration of project approval, has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR (including a General Plan) or Negative Declaration [CCR, Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA, § 15063(c)(3)(D)]. References to an earlier analysis should:
 - a) Identify the earlier analysis and state where it is available for review.
 - b) Indicate which effects from the environmental checklist were adequately analyzed in the earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and whether these effects were adequately addressed by mitigation measures included in that analysis.
 - c) Describe the mitigation measures in this document that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and indicate to what extent they address site-specific conditions for this project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate references to information sources for potential impacts into the checklist or appendix (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, biological assessments). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should include an indication of the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. A source list should be appended to this document. Sources used or individuals contacted should be listed in the source list and cited in the discussion.
8. Explanation(s) of each issue should identify:
 - a) the criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate the significance of the impact addressed by each question and
 - b) the mitigation measures, if any, prescribed to reduce the impact below the level of significance.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title: Rodeo Berm Removal and Restoration Project

Project ID#
PCA#

Contact Person: Suzanne Goode, Sr. Environmental Scientist **Telephone:** (818) 880-0350 Ext. 113

Address: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Angeles District
1925 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas, California 91302

Location: Lower Topanga Canyon, Topanga State Park

Checklist Date: September 2006

Project Description: See Section I of this Document.

B. INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------

1. AESTHETICS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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

The project will result in restoration of Topanga Creek and the surrounding area within the project limits to a natural condition. The man-made berm will be removed and a revegetation program will remove native and non-native vegetation and re-establish native vegetation at the appropriate grade. The project site will thus be returned to a more scenic state. No structures, hardscape or lighting will be added. The project is consistent with other State Parks efforts to restore the lower Topanga area, including removal of the existing homes and commercial structures on and adjacent to PCH and Topanga Canyon Road (excluding historical buildings, which will be maintained as a part of the Park; see Section 5, Cultural Resources, below). Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) is a State-designated California Scenic Route. However, the project site is not currently visible from PCH, and if it were, the project would result in a positive impact to scenic resources.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are needed or required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--	--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

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. Would the project:

ISSUES

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"/>

COMMENTS

The project site is not in use for farming or any other form of agriculture, nor has it been used for such purposes in the last twenty years. The project parcel is not enrolled within a Williamson Act contract (California Land Conservation Act of 1965) and is not under any zoning requirements that would restrict the use to agriculture.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--	--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------

3. AIR QUALITY.

ISSUES

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. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

The following analysis is based on the Air Quality Analysis prepared for the proposed project by Giroux and Associates, dated August 31, 2006 (included as **Appendix B**).

COMMENTS

Air quality is evaluated and regulated locally by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), which prepares the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and provides guidance for air quality assessment for projects in the South Coast Air Basin, a region that includes all of Los Angeles and parts of surrounding counties. SCAQMD regulations incorporate and therefore administrate air quality regulations promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the California EPA and the California CAA (CCAA).

The South Coast Air Basin has been designated by the U.S. EPA as a non-attainment area for ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter (PM-10). The CO standard is currently met in the basin, and re-designation to "attainment/maintenance" is anticipated shortly. Due to the variations in both the regional meteorology and in area-wide differences in levels of air pollution emissions, patterns of non-attainment have strong spatial and temporal differences. The number and severity of violations of clean air standards along Santa Monica Bay are much less than in other parts of the basin. The project site is located less than a mile from the coast, and is therefore within an area of localized, cleaner air as compared to downtown Los Angeles or the inland valleys. Nevertheless, the standards apply to all areas of the Basin, as pollutants generated by individual projects incrementally add to cumulative regional air quality conditions.

Air Quality Impact Significance Standards

Standards of Significance

Many air quality impacts that result from the dispersed mobile sources, i.e., the dominant pollution generators in the basin, often occur hours later and miles away after photochemical processes have converted the primary exhaust pollutants into secondary contaminants such as ozone. The incremental regional air quality impact of an individual project is generally immeasurably small. The SCAQMD has therefore developed suggested significance thresholds based on the volume of pollution emitted rather than on actual ambient air quality because the direct air quality impact of a project is not quantifiable on a regional scale. Any projects in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) with daily emissions that exceed any of the following thresholds listed in **Table 3-1** are recommended by the SCAQMD to be considered individually and cumulatively significant.

Table 3-1
SCAQMD Emissions Significance Thresholds
(pounds/day)

Pollutant	Construction	Operations
ROG	75	55
NOx	100	55
CO	550	550
PM-10	150	150
SOx	150	150

Source: SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, November, 1993 Rev., as cited by Giroux and Associates, August 31, 2006.

Additional Indicators

In its CEQA Handbook, the SCAQMD also states that additional indicators should be used as screening criteria to determine the need for further analysis with respect to air quality. The additional indicators are as follows:

- Project could interfere with the attainment of the Federal or State ambient air quality standards by either violating or contributing to an existing or projected air quality violation.
- Project could result in population increases within the regional statistical area, which would be in excess of that projected in the AQMP.
- Project could generate vehicle trips that cause a CO hot spot.
- Project might have the potential to create or be subjected to objectionable odors.
- Project could have hazardous materials on site and could result in an accidental release of air toxic emissions.
- Project could emit an air toxic contaminant regulated by District rules or that is on a federal or State air toxic list.
- Project could involve disposal of hazardous waste.
- Project could be occupied by sensitive receptors near a facility that emits air toxics or near CO hot spots.
- Project could emit carcinogenic air contaminants that could pose a cancer risk.

The proposed project will entail the removal of soil, some of which may be lead-contaminated. However, the lead particles are heavy and are not prone to becoming airborne. Except for exhaust from excavation equipment and on-road trucks, toxic

air contaminants are not expected to be a project issue. There are no post-removal air quality impacts. Any potential air quality impacts would thus derive mainly from "criteria" air pollutants during removal operations with the listed significance thresholds.

Short Term Air Quality Construction Impacts

Grading and earth movement produce air pollutants from two sources. One is from the earthen materials themselves, smaller particles of which become airborne (also termed "fugitive dust"), and the second is from the emissions from construction equipment and vehicles. Air pollutants will be generated on a short-term basis from these sources during the berm deconstruction phase and to a much lesser degree during the short-term restoration phase.

Fugitive Dust (PM-10)

Dust (PM-10) emissions will be generated from on-site excavation and truck loading, from export of fill material via haul trucks, and from off-site placement and compaction of the exported material. For purposes of this analysis, it has been assumed that the average daily excavation and subsequent disposal area totals two acres on any given day. A maximum activity day was assumed to move 1,000 cubic yards, requiring 50 daily truck-loads of earth hauling (50 daily roundtrips).

In the absence of definitive data on silt content, soil moisture, wind speeds, etc., the "default" PM-10 emissions data from the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook were used to calculate daily PM-10 emissions. These factors, from Table A9-9 of the handbook, are 10.0 pounds/day/acre for grading and fill placement and 0.031 pounds/ton for truck loading/unloading. IN addition, daily PM-10 emissions are estimated as 20.0 pounds/day (2 acres x 10 pounds/acre) for excavation and disposal and 40.3 pounds/day (1,300 tons x 0.031 pounds/ton) for truck loading/dumping, resulting in 60.3 pounds/day.

PM-10 emissions will be less than the 150 pounds per day significance threshold. However, the non-attainment status of the air basin for PM-10, the rules of the SCAQMD (Rule 403), and the presence of dust-sensitive land uses near the project site all require that best available control measures (BACM's) for dust be used during berm removal. The matrix of recommended dust control measures is included in the mitigation section below.

Construction Equipment Exhaust

The disposal site will vary with the level of contamination of the excavated material. "Clean" material will be trucked to a landfill in Los Angeles County. Contaminated material will require disposal at a hazardous waste repository in the San Joaquin Valley or at desert locations in Riverside or Imperial Counties. The distance of daily hauling and associated air pollution emissions depends upon the currently unknown split between clean versus contaminated materials.

On-site equipment to extract the material and load the trucks was assumed to use a rubber-tired dozer and a rubber tired loader. At the unloading end, the material was assumed to be pushed by a dozer and compacted with a compactor. A water truck will provide dust suppression at both travel ends. A split of two thirds/one third was assumed between clean and contaminated dirt, respectively. A 30-mile roundtrip distance for clean fill disposal was assumed. A 40-mile one-way distance was assumed for contaminated fill disposal before the truck leaves the air basin. The total daily disposal travel distance was estimated as 990 miles (33 loads x 30 miles/roundtrip) for clean fill and 1,366 miles (17 loads x 80 miles/round trip) for contaminated fill, for a total of 2,350 miles.

Peak daily air pollution emissions were calculated by combining emission factors from the SCAQMD construction emissions web-site (off-road), and the EMFAC2002 computer model (on-road), and comparing the resulting emissions to the applicable SCAQMD significance thresholds.

Peak daily project related emissions, shown in **Table 3-2**, will be below the SCAQMD CEQA significance threshold for all pollutants. NOx emissions will be near the threshold and could exceed the threshold if the bulk of the excavated material is contaminated and must be hauled for longer distances. Both because of the non-attainment status of the air basin and the small margin of NOx safety, reasonably available control measures for NOx emissions are recommended.

Table 3-2
Maximum Project Construction Activity Emissions (pounds/day)

Construction Sources	Emissions (pounds/day)				
	CO	NOx	PM-10	SOx	ROG
Dozers – 6 hours	6.6	17.5	0.7	2.7	1.3
Loader – 4 hours	1.7	4.7	0.3	0.9	0.4
Compactor 2 hours	1.4	14.0	0.2	0.6	0.4
Water trucks - 10 hours	1.7	0.3	<1	<1	0.2
Total Equipment	11.4	26.5	1.2	4.2	2.3
Employee Commute – 5,000 mi.	7.0	0.7	<1	<1	0.7
Fugitive Dust - 2 acres	-	-	2.0	-	-
Haul Trucks – 2,350 mi.	52.5	69.3	1.9	-	6.0
Project Total	70.9	96.5	3.1	4.2	9.0
SCAQMD Threshold	550.	100.	150.	150.	75.
Exceeds (?)	No	No	No	No	No
Source: The SCAQMD Web-site (CEQA) for off-road equipment and the California ARB MVE17G for on-road sources, as cited by Giroux and Associates (August 31, 2006).					

Long Term Air Quality Impacts

The project is a berm removal and restoration project, which will not generate air pollutants, thus it will have no long-term air quality impacts.

Other Impacts

The project will not generate any substantial odors. The project would not conflict with the Air Quality Management Plan in that it is not a development project, nor will it adversely affect any sensitive receptors.

MITIGATION

No long-term mitigation measures are necessary. Project-related air pollution emissions during removal of the berm will not exceed SCAQMD CEQA thresholds, based upon reasonable assumptions of off-road equipment use and on-road hauling distances. NOx exhaust emissions may, however, approach the threshold. The non-attainment status of the air basin for photochemical smog and the proximity of pollution-sensitive uses near the project site, as well as the possibly small margin of safety for NOx, all suggest that an enhanced level of impact mitigation should be implemented. The recommended matrix of dust and exhaust emissions is as follows:

Fugitive Dust (PM-10)

- AQ-1** Use low pollutant-emitting construction equipment where/when feasible.

- AQ-2** Use oxidation catalyst equipped, diesel-powered equipment, if such equipment is economically available.

- AQ-3** Water the construction area twice daily (preferably four times) to minimize fugitive dust.

- AQ-4** Stabilize (for example, hydroseed) graded areas as quickly as possible to minimize dust.

- AQ-5** Implement track-out control as follows:
 - Apply chemical stabilizer or pave the last 100 feet of internal travel path within a construction site prior to public road entry.
 - Install wheel washers adjacent to a paved apron prior to vehicle entry on public roads.
 - Remove any visible track-out into traveled public streets within 30 minutes of occurrence.
 - Wet wash the construction access point at the end of each workday if any vehicle travel on unpaved surfaces has occurred.
 - Provide sufficient perimeter erosion control to prevent washout of silty material onto public roads.

- AQ-6** Cover haul trucks or maintain at least 12 inches of freeboard to reduce blow off during hauling.

- AQ-7** Suspend all soil disturbance and travel on unpaved surfaces if winds exceed 25 mph.

- AQ-8** Enforce a 15 mph speed limit on all unpaved surfaces at a construction site.

Equipment NOx Emissions

- AQ-9** NOx emissions may temporarily approach the daily significance threshold. Any off-road equipment operating on the berm-removal site with engine power output exceeding 100 horse-power should be equipped with Tier 3-rated engines that limit combined NOx and ROG emissions to 3.0 grams per horsepower-hour of power output.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

- 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input 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

According to the Rodeo Grounds Road Restoration and Revegetation Plan prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Angeles District (July 2006), and included in **Appendix C**, the project area consists of a mixture of remnant wetland species, disturbed riparian assemblages dominated by southern willow scrub, and coastal sage scrub on the perimeter, with non-native exotic landscape and escaped plant species surrounding the houses, which are currently being removed. Over 100 non-native trees ranging from large *Eucalyptus* to smaller fruit trees are present. Several large stands of giant reed (*Arundo donax*) are also present. In addition to the willow complex, several mature native trees, including sycamore, coast live oak, California walnut, toyon, Mexican elderberry and a single specimen of Fremont cottonwood are also present. While some of these trees are sufficiently isolated from the fill materials of the berm, others have grown on top of the berm, and they will need to be removed along with the fill materials. Lists of the vascular plants observed at the project site and of sensitive plant species, as well as bird species, present in the Topanga Canyon area are also included in **Appendix C**.

The project's total potential area of direct impact includes an estimated 1.81 acres, which consists of the 80,000 square foot (1.8 acres) berm and the 0.01 acres of delineated, but marginal, wetlands (see **Appendix C** for the project Wetland Delineation Survey). An additional presently disturbed 10.5 acres will benefit from the removal of the exotic vegetation associated with the berm and structures. This area has been disturbed since the 1920's and has little present habitat value. Thus, removal of the berm will result in restoration of over 12.4 acres of floodplain (the berm plus the disturbed adjacent habitat), allow natural re-adjustment of the creek channel and restore natural sediment transport regimes. These actions are anticipated to result in direct benefits to endangered steelhead trout who will be able to then access almost four miles of suitable habitat that is seasonally restricted due to the sub-surface flows associated with the berm.

The purpose of the project is to benefit Topanga Creek; any adverse project impacts are temporary, and the restoration effort is designed to reduce the affected area of waters and wetlands to the most minimal amount necessary to accomplish the berm removal and restoration process.

Removal of the Rodeo Grounds Berm will restore the natural stream channel and restore above surface creek flow of Topanga Creek to provide summer rearing habitat, as well as improve over-winter habitat and critical passage links for the

endangered southern steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) between the main stem of Topanga Creek and the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, it is anticipated that removal of the berm will allow natural storm flushing of accumulated sediments from upstream of the project area, restoring over 1,000 linear meters of creek connectivity that is critical for migrating adult and juvenile steelhead trout. The removal of these sediments should also result in a more natural diversity of geomorphologic habitat units, which should provide additional spawning and rearing habitat for fishes. A list of the sensitive wildlife species present in the Topanga Canyon area is included in **Appendix C**.

As stated in the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Project Oak Tree Report and Native Tree Preservation and Removal Plan prepared by the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (July 2006), also included in **Appendix C**, in order to remove the fill materials of the Rodeo Grounds Berm and restore the floodplain and channel of Topanga Creek, it will be necessary to remove the following native trees that are growing into the berm:

- Approximately 30 willows (*Salix lasiolepis*, *S. laevigata*) of varying sizes;
- Two toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*);
- One Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*);
- One coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Tree No. 1;
- One heritage Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Tree No. 2; and
- One California walnut (*Juglans californica*), Tree No. 3.

Typically, trunks buried in fill become structurally compromised and fail once the surrounding fill is removed. Adventitious roots along the trunks would also be cut in order to remove the fill to original grade, further compromising the structural stability and health of the trees. Following removal of the berm, the trees would also be located within a restored floodplain and subject to potential creek channel adjustments and the force of storm flows. Both the California Coastal Commission and the California Department of Fish and Game will require mitigation for the loss of these native trees, which is provided below.

Due to their location on the lower edges of the berm, it appears possible to retain several mature sycamore trees (*Platanus racemosa*) including Tree Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Careful excavation of the surrounding soil, supervised by a qualified certified arborist or resource biologist, is recommended in order to determine the distribution of roots and extent of the root ball that can be retained to provide structural stability. Since failure of the trees is a possibility once the soil environment is changed, mitigation for these trees is recommended below. It is noted that an additional 10.5 acres of berm-adjacent floodplain area will benefit from the removal of the exotic vegetation associated with the structures, which is a positive impact of the project. No mitigation measures are required for the 10.5-acre berm-adjacent floodplain area.

MITIGATION

BR-1 Mitigation for the trees that will be removed from the project site as a result of removal of the Rodeo Grounds Berm shall include:

BR-1a Tree No. 1, Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

The loss of this tree shall be mitigated with planting a minimum of five one-gallon coast live oaks grown from locally collected acorns, and an additional ten acorns in tree tubes.

BR-1b Tree No. 2, Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*)

Mitigation for this heritage size tree shall include planting a minimum of 15 cuttings propagated from the tree prior to its removal.

BR-1c Tree No. 3 California Walnut (*Juglans californica*)

The minimum replacement planting for this tree shall consist of three one-gallon trees, as well as ten nuts in tree tubes, which should be gathered from within the Topanga Creek Watershed.

BR-1d Willows (*Salix lasiolepis*, *S. laevigata*, *S. exigua*)

A minimum of 100 willow stakes cut from trees on-site shall be incorporated into the Revegetation Plan.

BR-1e Toyon and Mexican Elderberry (*Heteromeles arbutifolia* and *Sambucus mexicana*)

A minimum of ten toyon and ten Mexican elderberries shall be planted from seed material or cuttings harvested from within the Topanga Creek Watershed.

BR-2

In order to maximize the potential for retaining the mature sycamores (*Platanus recemosa*), Trees Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, the following measures are recommended:

BR-2a Excavation Technique

- An arborist or resource biologist shall be on site at all times to provide continuous guidance to the excavation crew.
- The area within the dripline plus an additional radius of 15 feet shall be delineated as the Root Protection Zone. All excavation within this zone shall occur under the direct supervision of a qualified arborist or resource biologist.
- Material shall first be removed with hand tools within a six-foot radius of the trunk to locate structural roots. Based on distribution of roots and trunk condition uncovered, the arborist can advise the crew if use of a bobcat or other excavation machine is possible without compromising the tree. If not, then excavation shall be confined to hand tools.
- If there is a question of tree stability once the fill material is removed, the arborist or resource biologist shall work with the CDPR ecologist to determine if the tree should be removed or retained and either allowed to fail under natural conditions or supported by bracing or cabling.

BR-2b Maintenance and Monitoring Plan

- A minimum of five years of maintenance shall be required, which includes quarterly visits from the arborist or resource biologist to monitor the structural integrity and overall condition of the trees.
- A minimum of five years of monitoring shall also be required, including but not limited to bi-annual photographic documentation, as well as documentation of structural and health condition.

BR-2c Mitigation Plan

- Should the sycamore trees fail, a contingent mitigation planting shall be incorporated into the Revegetation Plan for the site. A minimum of 15 one-gallon sycamore trees shall be planted. Use of locally derived plant materials is recommended.

BR-3

The proposed project shall incorporate the recommendations of the Rodeo Grounds Road Restoration and Revegetation Plan prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Angeles District (July 2006), regarding the revegetation of the upland/coastal sage scrub slope, restored floodplain, and berm footprint. The recommended species palette is included in **Table 4-1**, below.

Table 4-1
Species Palette for the Revegetation of the Rodeo Grounds Berm Project

Scientific Name	Common Name	Upland/ CSS	Floodplain	Berm Footprint
TREES				
<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	White Alder		X	X
<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	Toyon	X	X	
<i>Juglans californica</i>	CA Walnut	X	X	
<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	CA Sycamore		X	X
<i>Populus f. fremontii</i>	Fremont Cottonwood	X	X	X
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast Live Oak	X	X	
<i>Salix exigua</i>	Narrow-leaf Willow		X	X
<i>Salix laevigata</i>	Red Willow		X	X
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	Arroyo Willow		X	X
<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	Mexican Elderberry	X	X	
<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	California Bay	X	X	
SHRUBS				
<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Mule Fat	X	X	X
<i>Eriogonum cinereum</i>	Ashleaf Buckwheat	X		
<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum foliolosum</i>	CA Buckwheat	X	X	
<i>Malosma laurina</i>	Laurel Sumac	X	X	
<i>Rhus integrifolia</i>	Lemonadeberry	X	X	
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	Black Sage	X	X	
HERBACEOUS PERRENIALS AND SUB-SHRUBS				
<i>Encelia californica</i>	CA Bush Sunflower	X	X	
<i>Eriophyllum c. confertiflorum</i>	Golden Yarrow	X	X	
<i>Lotus scoparius</i>	Deer Weed	X	X	
<i>Lupinus succulentus</i>	Arroyo Lupine	X	X	
<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>	Orange Bush Monkey Flower	X	X	
<i>Oenothera elata hirsutissima</i>	Evening Primrose	X	X	
GRASSES				
<i>Elymus g. glaucus</i>	Blue Wild Rye			X
<i>Nassella pulchra</i>	Purple Needlegrass	X	X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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5. CULTURAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
d) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS

The potential for historic resources to exist at the project site was explored in the Cultural Resources Survey for the Topanga State Park: Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition (July 2002). According to the report, California State Parks recognizes cultural resources based on their eligibility or potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). A resource must be demonstrated to be significant under one or more of the following criteria outlined in the National Park Service National Bulletin 15 in order to be recognized as historically or architecturally significant:

A: Events. The resource is associated with an event, or series of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history.

B: People. The resource has an unequivocal association with the lives of people significant in the past.

C: Architecture. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

D: Archaeology. The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to history or prehistory.

A resource may qualify for the NRHP if it is 50 or more years old and significant within a historical context, meets the eligibility criteria, and has retained its integrity (assessed on location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). Potential historical significance and subsequent eligibility for listing in the National Register of Lower Topanga Canyon structures have been identified for the Topanga Ranch Motel, the Wood Family Cottage, and Wylie's Bait Shop. Wylie's Bait Shop has been identified as potentially historically significant under Criterion A, while the Topanga Ranch Motel and the Wood Family Cottage are both identified as potentially significant as historical resources under Criteria A and C. As all three structures lie outside of the project boundaries, the project is not expected to cause a substantial adverse change in their historical significance.

According to the Topanga State Park Archaeological Test Trenching Report for the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Project (October 4, 2005), prepared by Marla Mealey, archaeologist for California State Parks (**Appendix D**), no archaeological sites

or features are known or recorded within the project area. One site, CA-LAN-133, is located off-site at the mouth of Topanga Creek, and Lower Topanga Creek has been designated as sacred lands by the California Native American Heritage Commission. Archaeological monitoring, including four borehole excavations in the berm, occurred in February of 2005. No cultural resources were observed during these excavations (Sampson, Michael, 2005. Archaeological Monitoring of Four Borings within a 20th Century Berm at Lower Topanga Canyon). In addition, seven trench locations were located throughout the Rodeo Grounds to determine the presence or absence of buried cultural deposits and tested on October 4, 2005. Recovered materials included modern and recent historic glass, construction debris, window glass, fragments of mirrors, and pieces of porcelain and modern pottery. According to the archaeological test trenching report, it appears that the areas of the Rodeo Grounds that may be impacted by removal of the berm are entirely within the historic creek bed, and that there is no potential for cultural resources to be damaged or destroyed by the project's proposed activity.

Nevertheless, the report finds that the potential still exists for cultural resources to be located on terraces along the edges of the drainage or on the small natural ridgeline that extends out into the drainage from the west. Any future subsurface work that occurs in those areas will be tested and/or monitored by an archaeologist and Native American representative.

As the project involves excavation or disturbance of only 1) the top surface of site soils, and 2) previously disturbed soils brought from off-site, namely the berm, the project would not likely disturb any significant paleontological resources. Because the imported berm soil no longer lies in its natural state, were any resources found within it, they would no longer be situated in their original context and would not be considered significant resources. Nevertheless, the archaeologist hired shall have sufficient expertise for identification of significant paleontological resources, so that they may halt activity and call for appropriate handling of such resources, in the unlikely event that any are found.

MITIGATION

- CR-1** As the potential still exists for cultural resources to be located in the project area, any future subsurface work that occurs on terraces along the edges of the Topanga Creek drainage (or on the small natural ridgeline that extends out into the drainage from the west) should be monitored, and if necessary tested, by an archaeologist and Native American representative.
- CR-2** The archaeological monitor hired shall have sufficient expertise for identification of significant paleontological resources, so that he or she may halt activity and call for appropriate handling and disposition of such resources, in the unlikely event that any are found.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

- 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"/>
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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 (see Cultural Resources, above)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS

The project is located along the southern flanks of the central Santa Monica Mountains, which is a relatively young, rugged coastal range defining the southern margin of the Transverse Ranges, an east-west trending geological province also encompassing the major Santa Ynez, San Gabriel, and San Bernardino mountain ranges. The Transverse Ranges were deformed by the relative movement of the North American and Pacific Plates and are characterized by compressional folding and thrust and reverse faulting, most notably related to a large flexure in the San Andreas Fault north of the Transverse Ranges. Major faults and fault zones associated with the Transverse Ranges include the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults to the north and east, and the Malibu Coast Fault, Santa Monica Fault, and Raymond Fault. While the effects from these fault activities could range from very mild to severe ground motions, the project involves the removal of a berm and therefore will not expose people or structures to potential adverse effects resulting from earthquake fault rupture, seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, or landslides.

According to the Topanga Creek Watershed Erosion and Sediment Delivery Study (Orme, et. al. 2002), roads are sources of accelerated erosion and sediment yield from cut banks and resulting berms. Therefore, during rainfall or runoff events, sediment moves to roadside ditches and culverts and then on to stream channels. The report states that berms in Lower Topanga Canyon are potentially a large source of sediment. In addition, dirt roads such as that located on top of the Rodeo Berm, especially when designed poorly and lacking maintenance, are also associated with serious problems of erosion and sediment yield. As a result, removal of the berm and restoration of the creek bed is likely to reduce erosion and decrease the sediment yield to Topanga Creek. Any dirt roads or trails provided in the future for public recreational use will be properly designed and maintained by the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

The proposed project is removing a berm for which there is no formal record of the engineering or construction processes that produced it. Therefore, it is likely an unstable structure, not built in accordance with any Federal, State, or local regulations (i.e., may include unstable or expansive soils). However, the project itself will remove the unapproved berm and restore the project site to a natural condition. The project site is part of a State Park and would not be utilized for any habitable structures where geologic concerns would be an issue. Thus, neither the berm removal process nor the end condition of the site would result in on-site or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse that would present any risk to life or property.

RODEO GROUNDS BERM REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PROJECT
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The berm deconstruction phase will follow a prescribed Berm Removal Plan, a general version of which is contained in the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report prepared for by the project by GeoPentech in April 2005 (**Appendix E**). In addition, a remediation and waste removal firm, Clean Harbors, has presented additional recommendations regarding the removal process.

MITIGATION

Although no mitigation is required for project impacts to geology and soils, it is recommended that:

- GEO-1** The proposed project must be implemented in accordance with a Berm Removal Plan [a general sample of which is discussed in the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report prepared for the project by GeoPentech in April 2005 (**Appendix E**)], as well as in accordance with the recommendations of berm deconstruction and hauling contractor(s), such as Clean Harbors (**Appendix E**), or similar studies and recommendations by similarly qualified firms.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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?

COMMENTS

According to the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report prepared for by the project by GeoPentech in April 2005, the laboratory testing program performed for the project site included chemical tests for waste characterization of the berm fill soil for disposal options. These chemical tests were performed in general accordance with the applicable procedures of the Environmental Protection Agency. The compounds detected using the Total Threshold Limit Concentration (TTLC) procedures were below the TTLC hazardous waste criteria, where designated. With the exception of lead, these concentrations were also below ten times the Soluble Threshold Limit Concentration (STLC) and below 20 times the Toxic Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) hazardous waste criteria. The TCLP is a Federal method, and the STLC is a California method with stricter criteria regarding hazardous waste classification. Lead was detected in TTLC concentrations between 95.9 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) and 163 mg/kg in samples COMP(B2-CA-1B, B2-CA-2B), COMP(B3-CA-2B, B4-CA-2B, B6-CA-2B), B5-CA-1B, and COMP(B6-CA-3, B6-CA-4). As these lead concentrations were above ten times the STLC and above 20 times the TCLP, these samples were tested for lead using STLC and TCLP procedures. Lead was not detected in concentrations above 0.100 milligrams per liter (mg/L) (detection limit) using TCLP procedures. However, using STLC procedures, lead was detected in concentrations above hazardous waste levels (5 mg/L) in samples COMP(B2-CA-1B, B2-CA-2B), COMP(B3-CA-2B, B4-CA-2B, B6-CA-2B), and B5-CA-1B with a maximum STLC lead concentration of 6.17 mg/L. As lead was detected below Federal (TCLP) hazardous waste levels and above California (STLC) hazardous waste levels, this soil is considered non-Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (non-RCRA), or California hazardous waste, for disposal purposes.

It is possible that the lead contamination is related to the source of the berm fill, which is assumed to be partially originated from road demolitions and from soil adjacent to roads. It is likely that the fill materials were contaminated with lead before they were imported for berm construction, with the major source of lead in and around roads being the previous application of lead in gasoline. According to the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report, it appears that the hazardous waste lead contamination is laterally continuous across the majority of the berm, with the contamination located within the upper approximately eight feet of the berm.

Removal of the trapezoidal berm, which has a surface area of 80,000 square feet from toe to toe, a volume of approximately 520,000 cubic feet, and an estimated weight of 26,000 tons (100 pounds per cubic foot), involves the transport of approximately 17,000 tons of hazardous materials (lead-contaminated as described above) and 9,000 tons of non-hazardous materials to landfills. It is likely that the fill classified as non-hazardous will be accepted at the municipal landfill facilities operated by the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, such as the Puente Hills, or Shoal Canyon landfills. Other available facilities include the Simi Hills or Calabasas landfills. The non-RCRA, hazardous, waste must be disposed of at a facility that will accept this type of waste. The appropriate facilities identified in the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report include the Mecca II landfill in Riverside County, California; the Kettleman Hills Facility in Kings County, California; and the Clean Harbors Landfill in Buttonwillow, California. Without regulation, transport and disposal of both types of material could result in significant impacts. However, all transport and disposal shall occur in accordance with Federal, State and local regulations governing such activities and therefore is not expected to pose a significant hazard to the public (Questions 7a, 7b, and 7c, above). In addition, the RCD/State Parks will be contracting with a licensed contractor to handle the hazardous material removal.

The proposed project would not result in significant hazards or hazardous materials impacts associated with schools (no schools are located within one-quarter of a mile of the proposed project site), airports, or private airstrips relative to Questions 7c, 7e, and 7f above. Additionally, since the project does not involve the development of residential structures, it would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires. Should the site be determined

susceptible to fire danger, California State Parks shall take appropriate measures (such as posting warning signage and disallowing campfires) to protect visitors to Topanga State Park from fire hazards.

The project site is not known to be listed as a recorded hazardous materials site (Question 7d). Soil testing has not found contamination beyond the berm, and all hazardous berm materials will be removed and properly disposed of, as noted above.

MITIGATION

The potentially significant risk of upset conditions for transport of the soils are mitigated by existing Federal, State and local regulations governing the transport of contaminated soils. Mitigation measures in Air Quality (covering of trucks) and Geology (compliance with the Berm Removal Plan) will further mitigate impacts.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

II. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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

According to the Topanga State Park Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Final Interim Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse Number 2001121028, Prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, July 5, 2002, on file with the lead agency), Topanga Creek has a small watershed, approximately 18 square miles in size. However, it is the third largest and least developed watershed draining into Santa Monica Bay. It extends from Santa Monica Bay northward into the ridgelines of the Santa Monica Mountains and runs primarily from north to south. The majority of it is undeveloped supporting large areas of native vegetation. The watershed can be divided into the upper and lower watershed area. Lower Topanga Creek, in which the proposed project is located, extends from the ocean to the town of Topanga approximately four miles upstream.

Discharge into the system varies seasonally and is closely related to the amount of precipitation the area receives in a given year. High flow events are episodic with long periods of low flows in between. Major floods in Topanga Canyon have been recorded for the years 1938, 1969, and 1980. Hillside erosion and sediment transfers arise primarily in response to storm related precipitation and resulting changes in slope hydrology, generating debris flows. Landslides occur many days or weeks after a precipitation event. Slopes are not well protected from severe erosion due to relatively recent fires in the canyon affecting the native vegetation communities. Floods after fires occur sooner and are of a greater magnitude than a flood not following a fire event. Surface exposure after a fire would likely increase sediment yields significantly. This increased sediment yield from within the watershed would cause sedimentation at the downstream reach near the lagoon where the stream gradient is lowest.

According to the Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Soil Characterization Report prepared for by the project by GeoPentech in April 2005 (**Appendix E**), groundwater was encountered in boreholes B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, and B-6 in the Topanga Creek Deposits at depths ranging from approximately 12 to 14.5 feet below the ground surface. Borehole B-5 encountered refusal at a depth of 6.5 feet, therefore no groundwater was apparent in that borehole. The proposed project would have no impact on groundwater supplies, should any exist in the project area, nor would it interfere with groundwater recharge.

As the residential units that were located on the Rodeo Grounds are currently being removed from the proposed project site, and since neither new homes nor other permanent structures will be constructed, the water quality at the proposed project site will likely improve following removal of the homes and the earthen berm. (Although the berm is largely lead-contaminated, the soils and hazardous soil removal consultants do not believe the lead has contaminated the ground or water below or adjacent to the berm; the lead has not even spread to the entire berm.) Likewise, as the proposed project does not include the construction of any structures, people and structures would not be subject to flood hazards as result of the project. By removing the berm, which has interfered with the natural course of Topanga Creek, the proposed project will allow the drainage pattern of the Lower Topanga Watershed and Topanga Creek to re-adjust back to its natural state.

The Pacific Coast Highway bridge over Topanga Creek (Topanga Creek Bridge # 53-0035) was originally constructed in 1932, prior to construction of the berm. Removal of the berm and the return of the Topanga Creek to a natural condition will not adversely impact Topanga Creek Bridge, due to the concrete channel paving on the invert and the transition length of the slope gradient in the area (see **Appendix F**, California Department of Transportation Letter). In addition, most other structures in the project's vicinity were built prior to the 1950's, also prior to construction of the berm, and sit over 35 feet above the Creek's level. Based on the above, no adverse project impacts involving hydrology would occur after project completion. Natural changes in the river drainage pattern (location, scouring and deposition, etc.) will occur naturally over time once the project is complete, which is the desired effect.

RODEO GROUNDS BERM REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PROJECT
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

However, during the berm removal phase, some impacts to water quality may temporarily occur. In order to reach the restored post-project condition, excavation equipment must be used to deconstruct and remove the berm. In this process, slope erosion and siltation could occur. Best Management Practices and all conditions of the project Regional Water Control Board 401 Permit, the ACOE 404 Permit and the 1600 Fish and Game Agreement must be adhered to, in order to assure less than significant impacts to water quality during the deconstruction phase.

A full analysis of the hydrology and hydraulics of the Topanga Creek Watershed was performed by Moffatt and Nichols Engineers and is fully documented in Appendix C of the Topanga Creek Watershed and Lagoon Restoration Feasibility Study (2002). Cross sections located just upstream of the Pacific Coast Highway Bridge (downstream of the berm) and at 2,961 feet upstream (upstream of the berm) were examined with regards to water level and velocity changes relative to known storm events representing the most severe to least severe return periods. The modeling indicates that removal of the berm and restoration of the floodplain will result in a reduction of both velocity and water level from the berm downstream to the ocean. An excerpt from Table C-3, Hydrologic Modeling Results, is also included in **Appendix F**.

MITIGATION

- WQ-1** Best Management Practices and all conditions of the project Regional Water Control Board 401 Permit, the ACOE 404 Permit and the 1600 Fish and Game Agreement must be adhered to assure less than significant impacts to water quality during the deconstruction phase.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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9. LAND USE AND PLANNING.

ISSUES

Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 will restore the site to a natural condition. Surrounding land uses are commercial and residential (to be vacated prior to the project). The natural parkland use will be compatible with adjacent vacant, natural terrain and streambed areas. No conflicts with surrounding land uses would occur. The proposal is a conservation and restoration project, and thus, it would not create any adverse impacts on habitat or natural community conservation plans, nor would it conflict with any land use plan policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The project site is State owned, falls within Topanga State Park, and assists in fulfilling the goals of the Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Final Interim Management Plan (habitat restoration).

The project is not consistent with the portion of the Interim Management Plan that states than no roads will be removed during the interim period. Currently, a road exists on top of the berm. After the berm is removed, the public will be able to continue to use the lowered road footprint as a trail. The interim period was originally anticipated to last approximately two

years, until all of the residents of the area could be relocated and the residential structures demolished. As of February 2006, all of the residents have been relocated. Retention of the roads was necessary to accomplish this goal. The remaining residential structures will be demolished concurrently with this project. Therefore, the goals to be attained during the interim period will have been accomplished.

A General Plan for Topanga State Park, certified in August 1977, governs land use within lower Topanga Canyon. The project is consistent with the current General Plan. A new General Plan has yet to be formulated. However, State Parks may implement resource management projects and projects to protect health and safety on properties it owns and manages, even without a General Plan.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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10. MINERAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

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

The project is intended to remove only a constructed earthen berm, a majority of which is lead-contaminated. Implementation of the project does not involve any other removal or excavation, and thus would not result in the removal of mineral deposits, if any were to exist. In addition, the proposed project would not cover or otherwise make inaccessible any unknown resources on-site. No mineral resource impacts would occur.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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11. NOISE.

ISSUES

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

Short Term Noise Impacts

Project implementation will require the use of demolition and earth moving equipment for removal of the houses and berm, respectively. Other trucks and vehicles or equipment for hauling and for worker transport (construction workers, restoration specialists, etc.) and other project-related purposes would also be on-site during implementation. The loudest of these noise sources will be the demolition and earth moving equipment. Outdoor construction, using properly tuned equipment with mufflers, typically produces sound levels of up to 86 A-weighted decibels (dBA) at a distance of 50 feet. Operation of the equipment would occur in the immediate project area, with some vehicles driving off-site to remove debris and soil. On-site activity will not affect any uses that are sensitive to noise impacts, as all surrounding homes and businesses will be vacated prior to the berm deconstruction project (all but historic structures will be removed, and these will not be occupied). The nearest occupied land uses (homes and businesses) are located beyond intervening hillsides and at considerable distance, such that the temporary project noise would not adversely affect these uses.

The trucks used to haul the dirt are comparable to other trucks currently traveling PCH, Topanga Canyon Boulevard, and the Santa Monica Freeway (10), and would represent only a small percentage of the traffic noise on those roadways.

Local wildlife in the immediate vicinity of the equipment activity could be adversely affected by noise. However, the noise impacts anticipated would be of relatively short duration (approximately one to two months), and wildlife would be expected to return to the site following cessation of the temporary noise and human activity associated with the project. Following the

project, the site will provide better and less noisy habitat for wildlife than it was prior to acquisition, when the tenants were occupying the nearby residential units and driving over the berm. In order to reduce temporary noise impacts to the greatest extent feasible, mitigation measures are provided below. With implementation of these mitigation measures, temporary noise impacts are considered less than significant.

Long Term Noise Impacts

The proposal is a creek-restoration project, and no long-term noise sources would exist and no impacts would occur after the earthen berm is removed from the site.

MITIGATION

No long-term mitigation measures are necessary. The following short-term mitigation measures are to be applicable during implementation of the project and are necessary to assure less than significant noise impacts:

- N-1** The use of earth moving equipment, trucks and any other sources of substantial noise generation, shall be minimized to the extent feasible, in order to reduce potential wildlife impacts.

- N-2** The contractor(s) for the earth movement, hauling, and restoration project shall maintain activities within authorized areas and have workers refrain from excessive noises beyond those necessary from the equipment.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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12. POPULATION AND HOUSING.

ISSUES

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

The project will not add or eliminate viable housing. The housing units within the acquisition area are to be removed prior to and apart from this project. The tenants were appropriately re-located after the land was sold to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (as part of the 1,659 acre-acquisition adjacent to the southwest boundary of Topanga State Park) in 2001. No impact would occur due to this project.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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13. PUBLIC SERVICES.

ISSUES

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

As the project is a creek restoration project and does not provide any commercial or residential features, it does not require any public facilities. The property is a part of the public Topanga State Park; therefore, removal of the berm would have a beneficial impact to the park and provide an enhanced park for use by the public. The property would require police and fire protection, but to no greater degree than is currently required. Schools and other public facilities would not be affected. No adverse impact would occur.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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14. RECREATION.

ISSUES

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

The project site is a part of the Topanga State Park and would not create the need for more parks or recreational facilities. The project will enhance the recreational value of the site for enjoyment of nature studies, which is a beneficial impact. No adverse impact would occur.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

ISSUES

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>

The following analysis is based on the Traffic Control Plans prepared for the proposed project by Katz, Okitsu, and Associates, dated July 24, 2006 (included as **Appendix G**).

COMMENTS

Traffic generated by the project will consist of truck trips for hauling earth off the site, a small number of worker vehicle trips, and a small number of delivery trucks bringing plants and trees for the revegetation plan. The entire berm deconstruction / earth movement phase is anticipated take approximately one to two months. The revegetation program will follow, but will generate very few vehicle trips.

The largest number of trips would be haul truck trips. Worker vehicle trips and plant delivery trips are less of a concern, as they are fewer, and a number of these trips would generally occur on area roadways anyway, as workers and delivery trucks report to various construction or repair job sites. GeoPentech estimated the number of haul trips (**Appendix E**) based upon the amount of berm materials to be removed. Clean Harbors (**Appendix E**) was also consulted. The estimated volume of the berm is 520,000 cubic feet (or 19,000 cubic yards). The total weight of the berm is approximately 26,000 tons (assuming 100 pounds per cubic foot). According to Katz, Okitsu, and Associates, an estimated 726 outbound truckloads will use Pacific Coast Highway and Interstate 10, carrying approximately 17,160 tons. An estimated 374 outbound truck trips will be made by way of Topanga Canyon Boulevard over the Santa Monica Mountains, carrying approximately 8,840 tons. Movement of the dirt off-site would therefore take an estimated 1,100 roundtrips, or 2,200 one-way truck trips, to complete (assuming 24 tons of material per truck trip). The draft haul program proposed by GeoPentech would include up to 50 roundtrip truckloads (100 one-way trips) each day for an estimated 22 workdays. However, as hauling delays may be likely due to both unforeseen road conditions as well as testing of the contaminated berm materials, hauling may occur over a span of up to 40 days. The PCH is adequate in composition and rated to handle up to 80-ton trucks. The trucks proposed for use will weight approximately 34 tons empty, so the added 24 tons of material would bring the weight to 58 tons, well under the maximum. The project haul route and localized traffic control plan in and around the site must comply with Caltrans and California OSHA Guidelines.

The total number of trips would be spread over approximately one to two months, with up to 50 roundtrips (100 one-way trips) occurring and dispersed throughout each workday. Given the size of the project and short duration, such impacts are considered less than significant in most jurisdictions. Thus, it is anticipated that less than significant impacts to transportation or traffic would occur. The berm materials, as noted under Hazards and Hazardous Materials, above, would need to be trucked to landfills. As the trucks disperse from the project site, and eventually enter the freeway system, the trucks represent a smaller percentage of the roadway/freeway vehicles. The impact lessens the further the trucks disperse from the site.

The main concern, therefore, is the impact of trips at the site entry and exit point, on Rodeo Grounds Road at Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Wherever the large trucks or vehicles enter and exit a site, especially where they will enter traffic comprised of passenger vehicles and smaller vehicles, traffic safety is a concern. Significant impacts related to Question 15d could occur unless adequate precautions are taken. A conceptual and localized traffic control plan (included in **Appendix G**) has been developed for the site and addresses safety procedures (the need for flag-persons and parking guidelines for the trucks), as required by Caltrans.

The project is not a development project, thus the Checklist Questions about emergency access, parking, alternative transportation and air traffic do not apply.

MITIGATION

- TR-1** A detailed haul route and localized traffic control plan (based on the conceptual plan provided in **Appendix G**) shall be prepared by the applicant and approved by Caltrans during the permit process. The proposed project shall comply with all procedures and requirements stated in the final haul route and localized traffic control plan.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.

ISSUES

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

Once in place, the creek restoration project would not require any public facilities. No new infrastructure (storm drains, water lines, etc.) or infrastructure capacity would be needed. Existing infrastructure associated with structures will be removed as part of that project. However, implementation of the project requires the demolition and removal of an earthen berm. The dirt to be removed from the berm site (an estimated 19,000 cubic yards, or 26,000 tons) will be exported to landfills. A portion of that dirt (17,000 tons) is classified as hazardous and will require disposal at a landfill that can accommodate hazardous materials (i.e., lead contaminated soil from the berm), such as the Mecca II landfill in Riverside County, California; the Kettleman Hills Facility in Kings County, California; and the Clean Harbors Landfill in Buttonwillow, California. The remainder, or 9,000 tons of non-hazardous fill, can be deposited at a non-hazardous landfill.

An on-site generator and water supply will be needed during berm deconstruction. Water is available to the site. No significant impact to public services would occur.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures are necessary.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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C. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input 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

Mitigation is identified, above, to reduce significant temporary impacts that potentially could occur during the berm deconstruction phase with regard to: air quality, noise (wildlife), water quality (sedimentation and erosion during earth movement operations), and traffic (flow of trucks on and off the site during hauling operations). The project would have no significant impacts after mitigation. In addition, the following general mitigation measure shall apply to the project to assure understanding and enforcement of the measures:

- GEN-3** All contractor(s) for the earth movement, hauling, and restoration project shall be furnished with a copy of all relevant mitigation measures affecting their work.

III. PREPARERS OF THE MND, CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

A. PREPARERS OF THE MND

1. Lead Agency

This document was prepared by Envicom Corporation under the direction of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), with guidance from the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. Firms and Agencies that were consulted or contributed to the document are listed below. In approving this environmental document, State Parks accepts this document as its own.

California Department of Parks and Recreation, Angeles District Headquarters

1925 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, California 91302

Contact:

Ms. Suzanne Goode, Sr. Environmental Scientist

2. Project Team

Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM)

122 North Topanga Canyon Boulevard
Topanga, California 90290

Contact:

Ms. Rosi Dagit, Senior Conservation Biologist, Certified Arborist #1054

GeoPentech-Project Geotechnical and Geoscience Consultants

601 North Parkcenter Drive, Suite 210
Santa Ana, California 92705

Contact:

Mr. Steve Duke, Project Geologist

California Department of Parks and Recreation, Southern Service Center-Project Archaeological Consultants

8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, California 92108

Contact:

Ms. Marla Mealey, Associate State Archaeologist

3. MND Preparers

Envicom Corporation

28328 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, California 91301
Mr. Joseph G. Johns, President

Contacts:

Mr. Joseph G. Johns, President
Ms. Johanna Falzarano, Associate Project Manager

Contributing Staff:

Ms. Laura R. Kaufman, AICP, Director of Environmental Services
Ms. Johanna Falzarano, Associate Project Manager
Mr. Jack Blok, PhD, Principal Cartographer
Ms. Katherine J. Patey, Director of Biological Services
Mr. Carl Wishner, Principal Biologist
Ms. Christa Hudson, Environmental Analyst I
Mr. Christopher Boyte, Graphics Manager
Ms. Renee Mauro, Administrative, Lead Word Processor
Ms. Emily Feinberg, Administrative Assistant

B. AGENCIES CONTACTED FOR PREPARATION OF THE EIR

1. Federal

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- United States Army Corps of Engineers

2. State

- California Coastal Commission Staff
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California State Water Resources Control Board
- Catrans District 7

3. Local

- County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning

4. Native American

- Greg Dorame, Tongva Gabrielino Monitor, and John Tommy Rosas, a Tongva Gabrielino liaison
- The California Native American Heritage Commission

C. ORGANIZATIONS, PERSONS, AND PUBLICATIONS CONSULTED IN PREPARATION OF THE EIR

- Kaku Associates, Inc., Telephone consultation and Electronic mail correspondence with Mr. Netai Basu, AICP, Traffic Engineering Associate (consultant to the RCD on other projects). September 29, 2005.
- Letter Suggesting Berm Removal Methods, Michael Gray, Clean Harbors, Remediation and Environmental Construction Division. October 11, 2005.
- Oak Tree Report and Native Tree Preservation and Removal Plan, RCDSMM. July 2006.
- Sampson, Michael. 2005 Archaeological Monitoring of Four Borings within a 20th Century Berm at Lower Topanga Canyon. (On File at California State Parks, Southern Service Center, San Diego).
- Representatives of the Gabrielino/Tongva Indians of the California Tribal Council.
- Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal Study Soil Characterization Report, GeoPentech. April 2005.
- Rodeo Grounds Road Restoration and Revegetation Plan, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Angeles District. July 2006.
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III. PREPARERS OF THE EIR, CONTACTS AND REFERENCES
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- Topanga State Park Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Final Interim Management Plan & Environmental Impact Report Prepared by The Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation. July 5, 2002.
- Riparian and Upland Bird Communities at Lower Topanga Canyon, Topanga State Park, California, U.S. Geological Survey, Western Ecological Research Center, 2004 Annual Report.
- Topanga State Park Lower Topanga Canyon Acquisition Interim Management Plan Cultural Resources Survey Historical Resources Evaluation Report, Appendix J to the Interim Management Plan EIR.
- Vascular Plants Observed at the Project Site, Carl Wishner, Envicom Corporation. 2005.
- Traffic Control Plans for Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal, Katz, Okitsu, and Associates, July, 24, 2006.
- Letter discussing potential flooding and impacts to Caltrans' Topanga Creek Bridge (#53-0035), Caltrans, August 24, 2006.
- Giroux and Associates. Air Quality Impact Analysis, Rodeo Berm Removal Project, Los Angeles County, California. August 31, 2006.