

## **4.14 Recreation**

This section details the existing recreation conditions in the vicinity of the Proposed Whittier Main Oil Field Project Site (proposed Project Site), outlines applicable plans and policies, and summarizes potential recreation impacts and mitigation measures associated with the proposed Project.

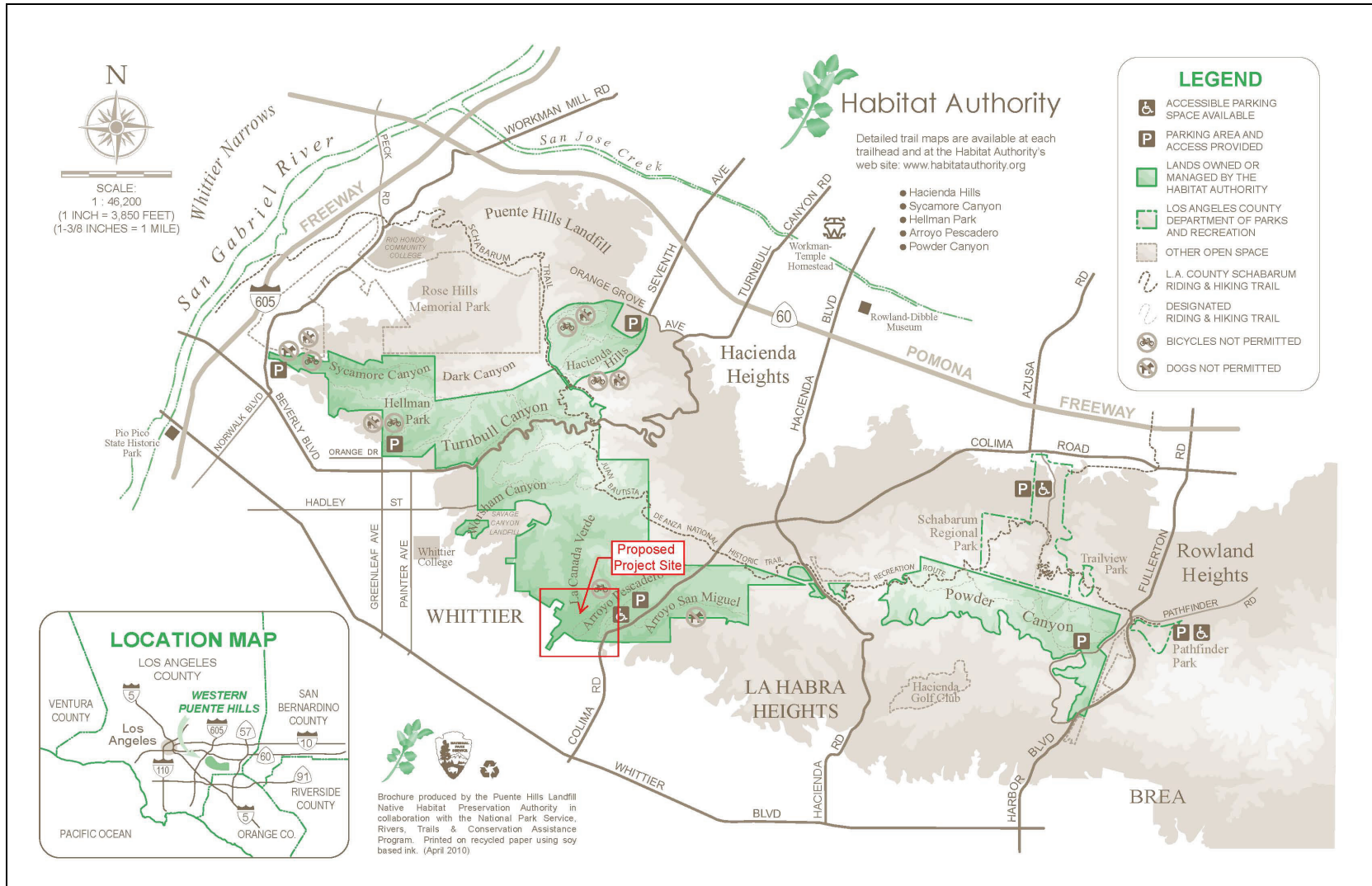
### **4.14.1 Environmental Setting**

The City of Whittier (City) owns approximately 1,290 acres of former oil fields, known as Whittier Main Oil Field, in the hills north of the developed areas of the City. The majority of the land encompassing the oil field was purchased from Chevron and Unocal with Proposition A funds to preserve the land as open space and wildlife habitat. This land falls within the larger area known as the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preserve (Preserve) and is currently managed for the City by the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority). The purpose of the Habitat Authority is to acquire, restore, and maintain open space in the Preserve as permanent protection for the native habitat with special consideration given to the community of Hacienda Heights.

The Preserve is located at the eastern edge of Los Angeles County, bound by the San Gabriel River on the west and the Chino Hills to the east. With 3,869 acres, the Preserve extends across the boundaries of three municipalities: the City of La Habra Heights; the City of Whittier; and the communities of Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights, both in unincorporated Los Angeles County. Other public agencies with jurisdictional interests in the Preserve include the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (PHLNHPA 2007).

Due to the Preserve's topography and climate, it offers an abundance of recreational opportunities. The surrounding metropolitan area provides good highway access and contributes to year-round use by local residents and regional visitors. Recreational activities popular within the Preserve include hiking, jogging, mountain biking, dog walking, horseback riding, nature appreciation, bird watching, and outdoor education. To balance these recreational activities with the health of the ecosystem, the Habitat Authority actively monitors and manages the many trails in the Preserve and maintains areas off-limits to the public (RMP 2007). See Figure 4.14-1.

Figure 4.14-1 Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preserve



Source: PHLNHPA 2010

The City of Whittier owns the proposed Project Site, a subset of the Preserve in the southeastern area within the Arroyo Pescadero area (see Figure 4.14-1). The Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead, within a portion of the Preserve relevant to the proposed Project Site, includes three trails: Arroyo Pescadero Loop Trail, Arroyo San Miguel Trail, and the Deer Loop Trail (see Figure 4.14-2). The proposed gas company meter building (metering station) is adjacent to a portion of the Arroyo Pescadero Loop Trail, while the proposed oil and gas production pipeline (underground) runs congruous to parts of the Arroyo Pescadero Loop Trail and the Deer Loop Trail (see Figure 4.14-3). The Project Site is several hundred feet away from the Deer Loop Trail (PHLNHPA 2010).

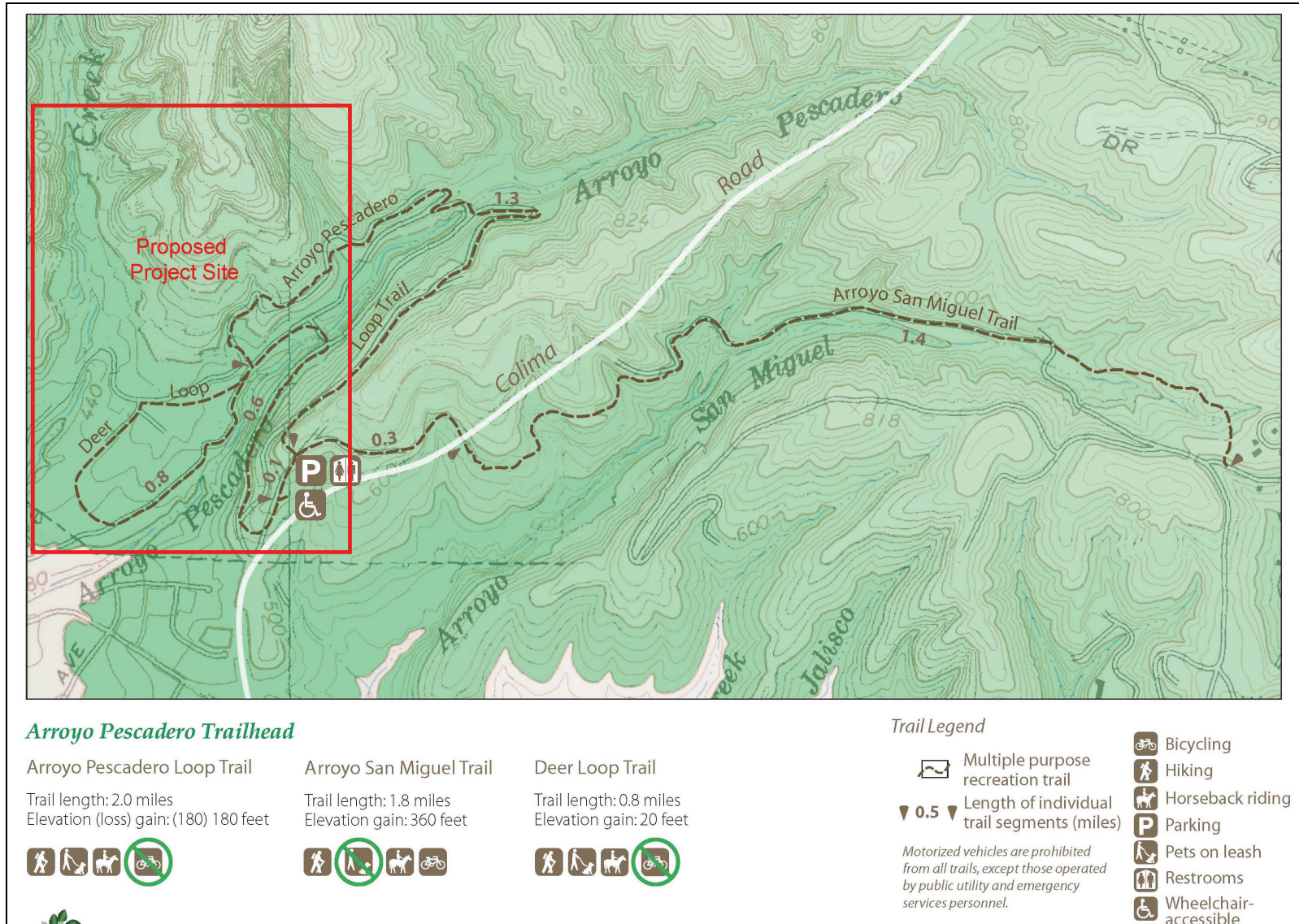
### **2006 University of Southern California User Survey**

In July of 2006, the University of Southern California Center for Sustainable Cities released the Park Visitor User Survey for the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority (Survey), which was used to develop the Preserve's 2007 Resource Management Plan (RMP) (see Section 4.14.1.2, Resource Management Plan).

The Survey was conducted over 4 days in October of 2005, including weekdays and weekends. The Survey included both head counts and individual surveys conducted at five Preserve entrances: Hacienda Hills Trailhead, Arroyo Pescadero, Turnbull Canyon, Powder Canyon, and Hellman Park. The Survey counted a total of 916 users and 371 surveys were completed. The 916 user count projects to a monthly count of 6,870, with a 5 percent margin of error. Not all survey respondents answered all questions and some respondents may have selected more than one choice, which accounts for some of the data not totaling 100 percent.

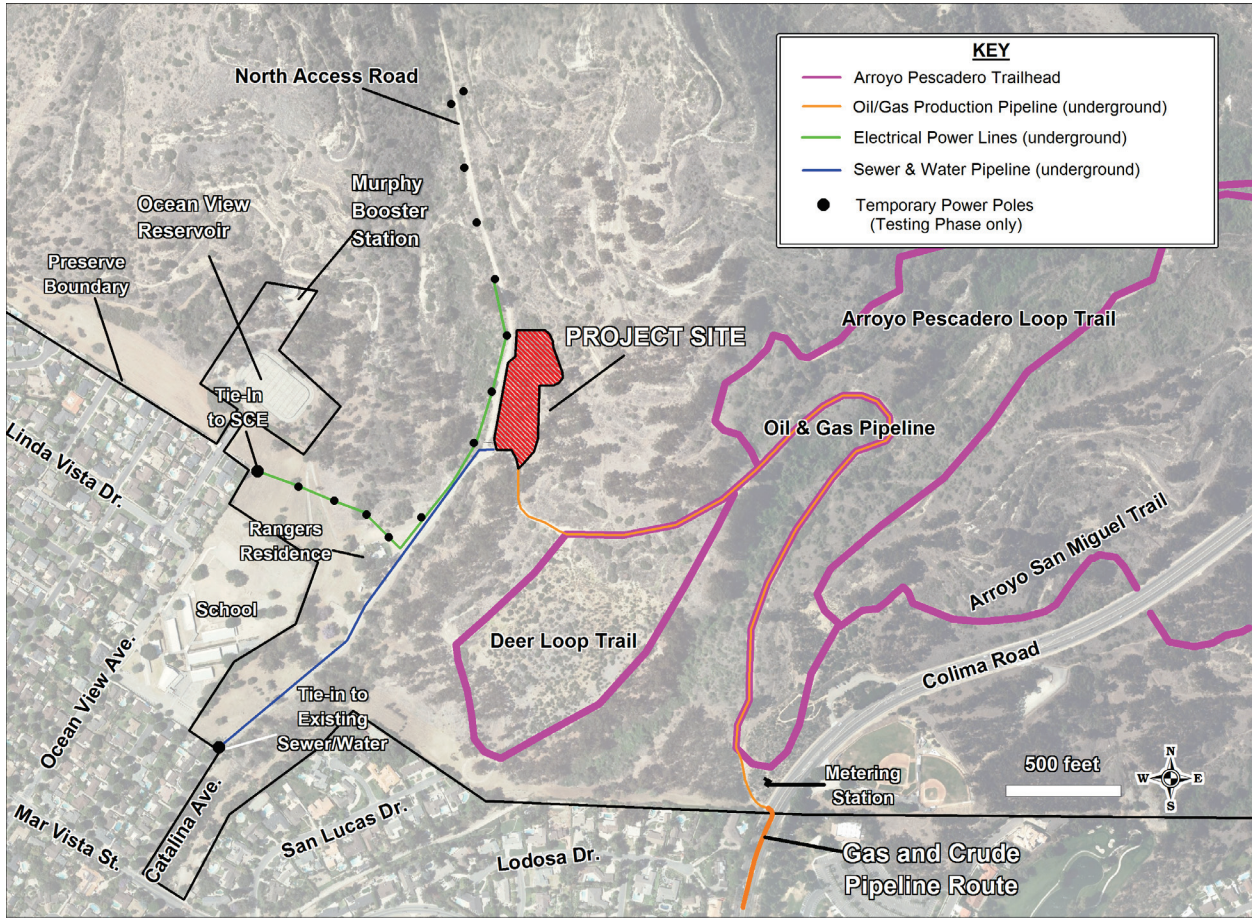
In general, the Survey found that hiking is the most prevalent activity throughout the entire Preserve and specifically that hiking is most prevalent on the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead. Moreover, users of the Preserve are mostly white males between the ages of 26 and 40. Figure 4.14-4 details relevant demographic data found in the Survey.

Figure 4.14-2 Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead



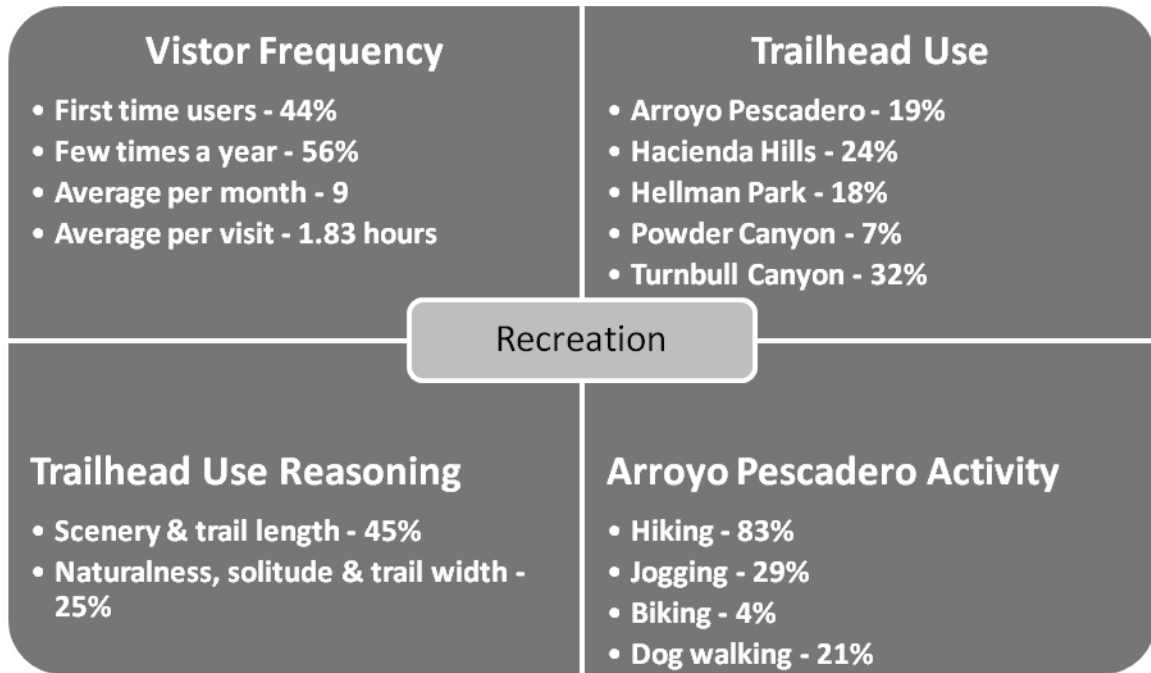
Source: PHLNHPA 2010

Figure 4.14-3 Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead and Oil and Gas Pipeline



Source: Matrix and Habitat Authority

**Figure 4.14-4 Preserve Recreational User Information**



Note: At the time of the study, the Arroyo Pescadero Loop Trail was impassable at the half-way point, which may have affected visitor use.

Source: Survey 2006

**4.14.2 Regulatory Setting**

The County of Los Angeles has developed regional regulations and management plans, and the City of Whittier and the Habitat Authority have developed local regulations and management plans.

**4.14.2.1 Los Angeles County Department Parks and Recreation**

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation's Strategic Management Asset Plan for 2020 outlines recreation goals for the County of Los Angeles. The focus of the plan is to enhance communication, build partnerships, develop resources, develop staff, strengthen physical infrastructure, and strengthen the organizational infrastructure (LACRPOSD 2011).

**4.14.2.2 Whittier General Plan**

The City of Whittier General Plan contains several elements that outline the City's goals and policies with respect to recreation.

---

## Environmental Resource Management Element

The Environmental Resource Management Element (ERME) describes community open space and recreation, scenic corridors, and natural resources that the City manages or desires to preserve. Specifically, the ERME contains a number of goals and policies associated with recreational resources, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Goal 5: Provide a sufficient range of recreation opportunities to meet the needs of residents of all ages and interests in the community.
  - Policy 5.2: Encourage cooperation between all user groups and agencies involved with parks and recreation, with special emphasis on the coordination of parks and school programs and facilities.
  - Policy 5.3: Integrate recreation-planning efforts to consider conservation, open space, and scenic highway areas and programs designed to conserve these resources.
  - Policy 5.5: Develop a system of continuous cross-town bicycle, equestrian, and hiking trails which will encourage the use and enjoyment of public open space in the City and the surrounding area.
  - Policy 5.7: Update the survey of parks and recreational facilities in the City to assess the current effectiveness of parks and recreation programs, as well as the needs and interests of Whittier residents, and update the City's Master Plan for Parks and Recreational Facilities.
  - Policy 5.10: Coordinate the use of parkland with other community concerns, such as air quality, traffic circulation, and safety.

Within the ERME is the Environmental Resource Management Plan (ERMP), which contains the Open Space and Recreation Plan (Recreation Plan). The Recreation Plan addresses parks and recreation facilities, bikeways and equestrian trails, and open spaces, as well as outlining guidelines for overall development of recreation opportunities and standards for park development (City of Whittier 1993).

## Transportation Element

The Transportation Element of the General Plan contains the following goal and policy relevant to recreation:

- Goal 4: Encourage the creation of a multi-use trails network in the City.
  - Policy 4.3: Encourage the development of multi-use trails to connect existing and future parks and open space and utilize parks and other open spaces for bicycle paths and trails, whenever possible.

## Noise Element

The Noise Element of the General Plan contains the following goal and policy relevant to recreation:

- Goal 2: Discourage noises which are detrimental to the public health and welfare and contrary to the public interest.
  - Policy 2.5: Recognize and follow acceptable noise level standards from schools, parks, and other land uses in future planning.

### **Land Use Element**

The Land Use Element of the General Plan contains goals and policies relevant to recreation, which are discussed in details in Section 4.11, Land Use and Policy Consistency Analysis.

#### **4.14.2.3 Resource Management Plan**

In 2007, the Habitat Authority prepared the RMP, a comprehensive, long-term management plan for the Preserve. Specifically, the RMP guides the Habitat Authority with regards to land use management of the Preserve.

In an effort to protect and restore the Preserve's natural resources, the RMP identifies several elements, goals, and objectives relevant to the proposed Project.

### **Cultural Resources Element**

- Goal CULT-2: Preserve and interpret the remains of the Whittier Oil Field as a significant historic site for the education and enjoyment of Preserve visitors.
  - Objective CULT-2.1: Allow the definitive elements of the oil field to remain in place and be passively managed.

### **Public Use Element**

- Goal USE-1: Provide a trail system that protects natural resources of the Preserve.
  - Objective USE-1.1: Consistent with the Habitat Authority's purpose, abandon roads and trails if impacts on native habitat or other resources are discovered.
  - Objective USE-1.2: Locate new trails away from sensitive habitat areas.
  - Objective USE-1.4: Consistent with the Habitat Authority's purpose, make decisions to reconstruct or reroute existing trails and emphasize minimizing ground disturbance.
- Goal USE-2: Enforce protection of the varied resources and promote an enjoyable and safe environment for visitors.
  - Objective USE-2.1: Consistent with the purpose of the Habitat Authority, encourage uses that acknowledge the natural and scenic beauty of the Preserve and facilitate enjoyment of the outdoor experience, as well as those that promote the safety of visitors. The Preserve rules outline appropriate uses and restrictions on the use of the Preserve.
- Goal USE-3: Create a trail system that provides a broad public benefit by accommodating diverse uses and user abilities, consistent with the purposes of the Habitat Authority.



- Objective USE-3.4: Prohibit the use of motorized vehicles in open space, with authorized exceptions.
- Goal USE-4: Accommodate parking, access points, and trail amenities that maintain the natural character of the land, enhance resource protection, and contribute to the enjoyment of open space.

#### **Interpretation Element**

- Goal INTERP-1: Enhance public stewardship of the Preserve, appreciation of the value of the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, conservation issues in general, and the property's significance within the Los Angeles basin consistent with the biological objectives of the Preserve.
  - Objective INTERP-1.1: Provide high-quality educational and outdoor-learning opportunities.
- Goal INTERP-2: Provide a trail system that promotes and enhances public enjoyment and appreciation of the natural, cultural, and scenic resources.
  - Objective INTERP-2.2: When feasible, produce an accurate and informative trail map for the public, with trail safety guidelines, that is accessible from the Habitat Authority's website.

#### **Visual Resources and Aesthetics Element**

- Goal VISUAL-1: Protect and enhance views and distinctive landscape features that contribute to the setting, character, and visitor experience of the Preserve.

#### **Facility Maintenance Element**

- Goal MAINT-1: Maintain facilities on the Preserve to ensure that biological resource values are maintained and that management activities are supported.
  - Objective MAINT-1.2: Maintain trailhead facilities and other structures that contribute to the integrity and value of the Preserve.
  - Objective MAINT-1.3: Maintain Preserve trails by clearing brush and performing other maintenance.
- Goal MAINT-3: Establish facilities to enhance appreciation and encourage research about the natural resources of the Preserve.

Additionally, the proposed Project Site falls within the Preservation Management Zone identified in the RMP. A Preservation Management Zone preserves habitat values along with compatible recreational and access uses and allows for existing passive, low-impact recreation, such as hiking, biking, and horse trails (RMP 2007).

### 4.14.3 Significance Criteria

Significance criteria are based on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and previous Environmental Impact Reports on regional energy projects. For purposes of this analysis, recreational impacts will be considered significant if the Project would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated;
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment;
- Conflict with planning efforts to protect the recreational resources of the Project Area;
- Degrade a recreational area or prolonged interruption of recreational use (e.g., due to an oil spill or cleanup efforts); or
- Create a nuisance to recreational area users (e.g., unpleasant views, noises, or odors).

### 4.14.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Local residents generate demand for local recreational facilities and are the main users of the Preserve. The proposed Project would not include new recreational facilities, would not require the reconfiguration of recreational trails, and would not adversely affect the physical environment, except for approximately 9 months during the Design and Construction Phase (Phase II) for the installation of the underground oil and gas pipeline.

Impact #	Impact Description	Phase	Residual Impact
REC.1	Concurrent operational and drilling activities at the Project Site during periods of the Project could affect recreational activities.	Drilling, Construction, Operations	Less Than Significant With Mitigation

Construction, drilling, and operations would generate additional noise in the vicinity of the Project Site within the Preserve. Section 4.5, Noise and Vibration, evaluates impacts and proposes mitigation for the proposed Project. Construction noise would be less than significant since it would be short term and only during daytime hours. For recreational users, however, elevated noises from construction machinery could be annoying and disrupt their normal recreational activities, particularly if the construction activities are close to any of the three trails within the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead. However, none of the recreational areas in the vicinity of the proposed Project Site would typically be affected by higher than 70 A-weighted decibels (dBA) daytime noise levels for construction, which are specified by Los Angeles County and City of Whittier guidelines as acceptable noise levels in recreational areas, such as parks. This impact, therefore, would be less than significant.

Crude oil and natural gas sales pipelines would be built under the existing Preserve Loop Road from the Project Site to Colima Road. The Loop Road and is located on a portion of the existing Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead (see Figure 2-6). The Loop Road may also serve as the Fire Department's secondary access route to the facility from Colima Road and may need to be widened to 20 feet.

Both the road widening and the pipeline installation would take place during the Design and Construction Phase of the Project and would last approximately 6 months. Trails may be temporarily closed to recreational use during these activities for up to 6 months (see Figure 4.14-3).

Drilling would occur for 3 months during the testing phase, for 5 years during the initial operations period, and for up to 3 months a year thereafter.

Noise from drilling at the Project Site could be significant without mitigation and could create a nuisance for recreational users in close proximity to the Project Site. However, noise from drilling is considered to be temporary in nature and would only occur when a well was being drilled. In addition, noise levels can be mitigated to less than significant levels, and therefore, recreational impacts from noise would also be less than significant with mitigation by implementing mitigation measures N-1a through N-1b, N-2a through N-2c, and N-4.

Noise from the Project Site operations would be associated with new oil pumps, compressors, and coolers, which when mitigated, would be less than significant. Operational noise generated from truck traffic to and from the Truck Loading Facility would not be significant due to the sporadic nature and low frequency of truck trips.

Implementing mitigation measures N-1a and N-1b, N-2a through N-2c, and N-4 would reduce noise impacts to recreational users to less than significant. In addition, the following mitigation measure would provide recreational users with information about activities at the Project Site.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

*REC-1 The Applicant shall construct and maintain interpretative signage within the Preserve's trails in coordination with the Habitat Preserve. Interpretative signage shall provide an educational component about the Preserve, drilling activities, mitigation, descriptions of local wildlife, habitats, and the environmental values of the Puente Hills area;, historic uses and others as determined by the City in consultation with the Habitat Preserve.*

#### *Residual Impacts*

The residual impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

<b>Impact #</b>	<b>Impact Description</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Residual Impact</b>
REC.2	The new drilling and operations would increase odors that could reach recreational users.	Drilling, Operations	Less Than Significant With Mitigation

As noted in Section 4.1, Air Quality, new equipment and drilling could create odor events. Several different components in the new equipment could leak and cause odors. New operations would use tanks, which could potentially lead to odor events. Drilling muds from drilling operations would create emissions. These types of releases could reach recreational areas surrounding the proposed Project Site. These would be a significant but mitigable impact if these mitigation measures are implemented.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

Implement mitigation measures AQ-3a through AQ-3e. No additional mitigation measures are proposed.

#### *Residual Impacts*

Implementing mitigation measures AQ-3a through AQ-3e would reduce the frequency of odor events and impacts would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation.

<b>Impact #</b>	<b>Impact Description</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Residual Impact</b>
REC.3	New drilling and operations would adversely affect public viewsheds.	Drilling, Operations	Significant and Unavoidable

The proposed Project Site would be in close proximity to portions of the Deer Loop Trail and some of the Arroyo Pescadero Loop Trail in the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead. Section 4.6, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, provides a detailed evaluation of the visual impacts.

Drilling would occur for 3 months during the testing phase, for 5 years during the initial operations period, and for up to 3 months a year thereafter.

Several of the views from recreational locations on the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead offer public visibility of the proposed Project Site that would be significantly altered as a result of the potential oil field development. Impacted views include those immediately adjacent to the trails as well as views of proposed facilities situated at considerably greater distances along viewshed-defining ridgelines where they commonly protrude into the skyline.

Further, adverse recreational impacts could result from site grading the natural terrain, removing natural vegetation, and introducing concentrations of oil field industrial development that would

be perceived as incompatible with adjacent uses. A Drilling rig would introduce an industrial component to numerous views that do not currently contain industrial aspects in their viewsheds. Due to the size and height of the drilling rig (125 feet) and their extension above tree lines and horizon lines, they would strongly contrast with the surrounding environment.

These impacts from new drilling and operations to recreation would be considered significant.

#### *Mitigation Measures*

Implement mitigation measures AE-1a and AE-1b. No additional mitigation measures are proposed.

#### *Residual Impacts*

The residual impact would be significant and unavoidable.

#### **4.14.4.1 Other Issue Area Mitigation Measure Impacts**

Mitigation measures proposed for other issues areas could increase impacts to recreation if they are implemented. This section discusses those potential mitigation measure impacts.

None of the mitigation measures proposed for other issue areas would change the impacts discussed in this section. Therefore, the mitigation measures would not result in additional significant impacts, and additional analysis or mitigation is not required.

#### **4.14.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Projects that could create cumulative recreation impacts are those that would contribute to an incompatibility with the recreational use of the Preserve in combination with the proposed Project. None of the proposed residential, commercial, oil development, or institutional projects listed in Section 3.0, Cumulative Projects Description, would impact recreation at the Preserve in combination with the proposed Project. Therefore, cumulative recreational impacts are expected to be less than significant.

**4.14.6 Mitigation Monitoring Plan**

Mitigation Measure	Requirements	Compliance Verification		
		Method	Timing	Responsible Party
<p>REC-1. The Applicant shall construct and maintain interpretative signage within the Preserve's trails in coordination with the Habitat Preserve. Interpretative signage shall provide an educational component about the Preserve, drilling activities, mitigation, descriptions of local wildlife, habitats, and the environmental values of the Puente Hills area; historic uses and others as determined by the City in consultation with the Habitat Preserve.</p>	<p>Development of plans and construction of interpretative signage</p>	<p>Review of design documents and construction and maintenance activities</p>	<p>Prior to construction and throughout Project</p>	<p>Habitat Authority and City</p>