

3.2 Effects Found Not Significant During Initial Study

This section provides discussions of those effects that were identified as not significant or less than significant during the Initial Study process and did not require further analysis. The Initial Study is included as Appendix 1.0-1. Each issue addressed includes a brief discussion of existing conditions for the Proposed Project area and, where applicable, a description of regulations or policies. For the purpose of this EIR, the County's Guidelines of Determination of Significance apply to both the direct/indirect impacts analysis and the cumulative impact analysis. Where the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance do not address the effects considered, Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines have been used as the basis for this analysis.

The following environmental areas were found to be not significant during the Environmental Initial Study process: Parks and Recreation, Mineral Resources, and Population and Housing. For all of the environmental issues below, the action to approve the Proposed Project would not be significant.

The Proposed Project consists of four renewable energy solar farms in southeastern San Diego County. The following impact analysis has been separated into discussions for each of the four solar farms: Tierra del Sol, Rugged, LanEast, and LanWest, as well as a combined discussion of the Proposed Project as a whole. For the purposes of this Program EIR, the Tierra del Sol and Rugged solar farms are analyzed at a project level, whereas the LanEast and LanWest solar farms are analyzed at a programmatic level as sufficient project-level data has not been developed at this time.

3.2.1 Parks and Recreation

3.2.1.1 *Analysis of Project Effects*

The County's Guidelines for Determining Significance do not include sections on Public Services–Parks and Recreation. Therefore, for the purpose of this EIR, Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines applies to the direct and indirect impact analysis, as well as the cumulative impact analysis.

A significant impact would result if the project would:

- result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:
 - Parks

- 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 which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.2.1.1.1 Regional Overview

The General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element establishes a goal of 10 acres of local park land and 15 acres of regional park land per every 1,000 persons in the unincorporated County. According to the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan of the County General Plan, the region currently has approximately 15 acres of local park land for every 1,000 population. However, the Boulevard Subregional Plan area, despite an abundance of open space, does not have any dedicated community parks or community facilities (County of San Diego 2011). Regional and local parks located near the project sites are listed below in Table 3.2.1-1 and shown on Figure 3.2.1-1.

In addition to the local and regional parks listed above in Table 3.2.1-1, recreational activities are allowed on nearby federal lands. There are wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) managed by the Bureau of Lands Management (BLM) nearby, including the Sawtooth Mountain Wilderness, Carrizo Gorge Wilderness, and In-Ko-Pa Mountains. ACEC, which are east of the LanEast and LanWest sites, are shown on Figure 3.2.1-1. Limited recreational activities are allowed on these sites. Cleveland National Forest is located approximately 9 miles west/northwest of the project sites and includes several recreational facilities and activities, such as hiking, camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, and off-highway vehicle riding. The closest recreation areas within the national forest to the project sites are the Laguna Mountain Area and the Coral Canyon Area (USFS 2012).

3.2.1.1.2 Tierra del Sol

Demands for parks and recreational facilities are directly related to local population levels. The Tierra del Sol solar farm does not propose any residential use, included but not limited to a residential subdivision, mobile home park, or construction for a single-family residence that would cause a direct increase in population. The Tierra del Sol solar farm also does not include a recreational component, such as a hotel, resort, campground, or other facility that would attract or accommodate an increase in visitors to the area that would indirectly increase the use or demand for recreational and park facilities and services. The Tierra del Sol solar farm would temporarily increase the region's local population during construction by up to approximately 120 workers. These workers could use the nearby park and recreational facilities and services during construction. However, since they would be working in the area temporarily and are not expected to relocate to the area with their families, they are not expected to generate a substantial demand for local park services.

Once construction is complete, the Tierra del Sol solar farm would add up to five permanent employees who would be expected to reside in the surrounding area, possibly with their families. The indirect increase in population in the area caused by the Tierra del Sol solar farm would reside in existing housing or reside in new residential housing, which would have separate permit and approval processes through which impacts to parks and recreation services would be addressed.

Therefore, the Tierra del Sol solar farm is not considered to contribute to a substantial increase in demand for park and recreational services, and impacts to park and recreational services from the Tierra del Sol solar farm would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.1.3 Rugged

Construction of the Rugged solar farm would require up to approximately 146 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to use the area parks or recreational facilities and services. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to 20 workers. As discussed earlier for the entire Tierra del Sol solar farm, the additional construction workers are not expected to permanently relocate to the area with their families, and therefore are not expected to cause a substantial increase in demand for parks and recreational facilities and services. The Rugged solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases and would not result in a substantial indirect increase in use and demand for park facilities and recreational services. Impacts to parks and recreational services would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.1.4 LanEast

Construction of the LanEast solar farm would require up to approximately 30 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to use the area parks or recreational facilities and services. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to three workers. As discussed earlier for the entire Tierra del Sol solar farm, the additional construction workers are not expected to permanently relocate to the area with their families, and therefore are not expected to cause a substantial increase in demand for parks and recreational facilities and services. The LanEast solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases and would not result in a substantial indirect increase in use and demand for park facilities and recreational services. Impacts to parks and recreational services would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.1.5 LanWest

Construction of the LanWest solar farm would require up to approximately 30 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to use the area parks or recreational facilities

and services. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to three workers. As discussed earlier for the entire Tierra del Sol solar farm, the additional construction workers are not expected to permanently relocate to the area with their families, and therefore are not expected to cause a substantial increase in demand for parks and recreational facilities and services. The LanWest solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases, and would not result in a substantial indirect increase in use and demand for park facilities and recreational services. Impacts to parks and recreational services would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.1.6 Proposed Project

Demands for parks and recreational facilities are directly related to local population levels. The Proposed Project does not propose any residential use, included but not limited to a residential subdivision, mobile home park, or construction for a single-family residence that would cause a direct increase in population. The Proposed Project also does not include a recreational component, such as a hotel, resort, campground, or other facility that would attract or accommodate an increase in visitors to the area that would indirectly increase the use or demand for recreational and park facilities and services. The Proposed Project would temporarily increase the local population during construction by up to approximately 146 workers in the region. Though these workers could use the nearby park and recreational facilities and services during project construction, they are not expected to relocate to the area with their families, and they are not expected to generate a substantial demand for local park services. Any increase in use or demand for parks facilities and recreational services during construction of the Proposed Project is expected to be **less than significant**.

Once construction is complete, the Proposed Project would add a combined total of up to 31 permanent employees who would be expected to reside in the surrounding area. The indirect increase in population in the area caused by the Proposed Project would reside in existing housing or in new residential housing projects, which would have separate permit and approval processes through which impacts to parks and recreation services would be addressed. Therefore, the Proposed Project is not considered to contribute to a substantial increase in demand for park and recreational services, and impacts to park and recreational services from the Proposed Project would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Demands for parks and recreational facilities are directly related to local population levels. The Proposed Project does not propose any residential use and does not include a recreational component, such as a hotel, resort, campground, or other facility that would attract or accommodate an increase in visitors to the area that would indirectly increase the use or demand for recreational and park facilities and services. The Proposed Project would temporarily increase the region's local population during construction by up to approximately 146 workers.

Though these workers could use the nearby park and recreational facilities and services during project construction, they are not expected to relocate to the area with their families or to generate a substantial demand for local park services. Cumulative impacts to local park and recreation services during construction would be considered **less than significant**.

Once construction is complete, the Proposed Project would add a combined total of up to 31 permanent employees who would be expected to reside in the surrounding area. The indirect increase in population in the area caused by the Proposed Project would reside in existing housing or in new residential housing projects, which would have separate permit and approval processes through which impacts to parks and recreation services would be addressed. Therefore, the Proposed Project is not considered to contribute substantially to a cumulatively considerable increase in demand for park and recreational services, and cumulative impacts to park and recreational services would be **less than significant**.

3.2.1.3 Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts to parks and recreational facilities and services. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.2.1.4 Conclusion

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts to parks and recreational facilities and services.

3.2.2 Mineral Resources

3.2.2.1 Analysis of Project Effects

For the purpose of this EIR, the County's *Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements: Mineral Resources* (County of San Diego 2008) applies to both the direct impact analysis and the cumulative impact analysis. The guidelines stipulate:

A project will generally be considered to have a significant effect if it proposes any of the following, absent specific evidence to the contrary. Conversely, if a project does not propose any of the following, it will generally not be considered to have a significant effect on mineral resources, absent specific evidence of such an effect:

- The project is:
 - On or within the vicinity (generally up to 1,300 feet from the site) of an area classified as MRZ-2 [Mineral Resource Zone]; on land classified as MRZ-3;

underlain by Quaternary alluvium; or on a known sand and gravel mine, quarry, or gemstone deposit;

AND

- The project will result in the permanent loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state;

AND

- The deposit is minable, processable, and marketable under the technologic and economic conditions that exist at present or which can be estimated to exist in the next 50 years and meets or exceeds one or more of the following minimum values (in 1998 equivalent dollars):
 - Construction materials (sand and gravel, crushed rock) \$12,500,000
 - Industrial and chemical mineral materials (limestone, dolomite, and marble [except where used as construction aggregate]; specialty sands, clays, phosphate, borates and gypsum, feldspar, talc, building stone and dimension stone) \$2,500,000
- Metallic and rare minerals (precious metals [gold, silver, platinum], iron and other ferroalloy metals, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, rare earths, gemstones and semi-precious materials, and optical-grade calcite) \$1,250,000
- The project would 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.

3.2.2.1.1 Regional Overview

The lands within the project area have not been classified by the California Department of Conservation–Division of Mines and Geology (California Department of Conservation 1997). The project sites are underlain by granitic bedrock (refer to Section 3.1.2 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity), which may contain mineral resource deposits suitable for crushed rock. However, due to the expensive mining and processing of crushed rock combined with transportation costs, this currently restricts crushed rock operations to urbanized areas closer to areas of demand in western San Diego County (County of San Diego 2008). In addition, there are no known quarries, mines, and/or gemstone deposits within or near any of the proposed project sites (County of San Diego 2008).

The Rugged and LanEast sites are also underlain by Quaternary alluvium, as described in Section 3.1.2, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity. Quaternary alluvium is a very broadly defined

geologic unit that contains a wide range of unconsolidated sediments including clay, silt, sand, and gravel. It is sand and gravel (i.e., aggregate) that is the most economically useful as construction materials. Aggregate is used in one form or another for the construction of roads, parking lots, buildings, homes, schools, hospitals, shopping centers, and other essential infrastructure. Quaternary alluvium that is composed mostly or entirely of sand and gravel is the most economically attractive commodity. Alluvium that has high fractions of fine-grained materials (i.e., clay and silt) is generally unsuitable because it increases the cost and decreases the efficiency of aggregate extraction.

Compared to crushed rock, alluvial sand and gravel mining and processing is relatively inexpensive, and there is also a scarcity of high-grade aggregate materials (i.e., Portland concrete cement) being mined in the County. According to the local mining community, this has made it economically feasible for alluvial sand and gravel mines to be potentially permitted in the eastern portion of the County provided there is a very efficient freeway or railway access to get the materials to market in the urbanized western portion of the County (County of San Diego 2008).

The only mineral resource within the project area that is potentially present, and possibly economically feasible to extract is aggregate (i.e., sand and gravel). Therefore, the discussion below is focused on aggregate as there would be no impacts with respect to crushed rock, industrial and chemical minerals, or metallic and rare minerals.

3.2.2.1.2 *Tierra del Sol*

As stated earlier, the Tierra del Sol site is underlain with granitic bedrock, which may be suitable for crushed rock, but is not currently located close to demand for these materials. The Tierra del Sol solar farm would not preclude the potential extraction of a mineral resource on the site in the future after decommissioning. Therefore, impacts related to the potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state as a result of the Tierra del Sol solar farm **would be less than significant**.

3.2.2.1.3 *Rugged*

As stated earlier, the Rugged site is underlain with granitic bedrock which may be suitable for crushed rock, but is not currently located close to demand for these materials. Quaternary alluvium locally overlies the granite (e.g., along the Tule Creek corridor), which means that construction-grade aggregate could potentially be present.

Although the nearby Interstate 8 (I-8) could be used to economically transport aggregate materials to urban markets in western San Diego County, the Rugged solar farm would not result in permanent loss of availability of aggregate resources for two reasons. First, if the alluvium is of suitable quality and economically viable to extract, the Rugged solar farm

would not preclude the potential extraction of the aggregate resource following the decommissioning phase of the project. Second, the site would likely be unsuitable under current land uses for a mining operation because of the presence of an environmentally sensitive area (i.e., Tule Creek), a floodway, as well as the presence of noise-sensitive land uses adjacent to the site. The closest private property line would be within 1,300 feet of the project, which is the noise setback that past County approved noise studies have indicated is needed for most typical extractive operations.

Therefore, impacts related to the potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state as a result of the Rugged solar farm would be **less than significant**.

3.2.2.1.4 LanEast

As stated earlier, the LanEast site is underlain with granitic bedrock, which may be suitable for crushed rock, but is not currently located close to demand for these materials. Quaternary alluvium locally overlies the granite, which means that construction-grade aggregate could potentially be present.

Although the nearby I-8 could be used to economically transport aggregate materials to urban markets in western San Diego County, the LanEast solar farm would not result in permanent loss of availability of aggregate resources for two reasons. First, if the alluvium is of suitable quality and economically viable to extract, the LanEast solar farm would not preclude the potential extraction of the aggregate resource following the decommissioning phase. Second, the site would likely be unsuitable for a mining operation under current land uses because of the presence of environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., Walker Creek which is considered an RPO wetland) as well as the presence of noise-sensitive land uses adjacent to the site. The closest private property line would be within 1,300 feet of the project, which is the noise setback that past County approved noise studies have indicated is needed for most typical extractive operations.

Therefore, impacts related to the potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state as a result of the LanEast solar farm would be **less than significant**.

3.2.2.1.5 LanWest

As stated earlier, the LanWest site is underlain with granitic bedrock, which may be suitable for crushed rock, but is not currently located close to demand for these materials. There is no Quaternary alluvium mapped on the LanWest site (see Section 3.1.2). The LanWest solar farm would not preclude the potential extraction of crushed rock on the site in the future after

decommissioning. Therefore, impacts related to the potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state as a result of the LanWest solar farm **would be less than significant**.

3.2.2.1.6 Proposed Project

The Proposed Project would not result in permanent loss of availability of aggregate resources, including sand and gravel, because such resources, if present and economically viable, could potentially be extracted in the future after decommissioning. In addition, the Rugged and LanEast sites would likely be unsuitable for a mining operation under current land uses because of the presence of environmentally sensitive areas as well as the presence of noise-sensitive land uses adjacent to the site. Therefore, impacts related to the potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state as a result of the Proposed Project would be **less than significant**.

3.2.2.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

As discussed above, due to the expensive mining and processing of crushed rock combined with transportation costs, crushed rock operations are currently restricted to urbanized areas closer to areas of demand in western San Diego County. Thus, there is no significant cumulative impact with respect to crushed rock resources.

However, some areas underlying the Rugged site and the LanEast site have the potential to contain aggregate resources. However, for the reasons discussed above, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a mineral resource, and thus, **would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact**.

3.2.2.3 Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to mineral resources. Therefore, mitigation is not required.

3.2.2.4 Conclusion

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts to mineral resources.

3.2.3 Population and Housing

3.2.3.1 Analysis of Project Effects

The County's Guidelines for Determining Significance do not include sections on Population and Housing. Therefore, for the purpose of this EIR, Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines) applies to the direct and indirect impact analysis, as well as the cumulative impact analysis.

A significant impact would result if the project would:

- 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)
- displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere
- displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3.2.3.1.1 Regional Overview

The Proposed Project would be located in the Mountain Empire Subregion of southeastern San Diego County, an approximately 285,000-acre, largely rural, low-density population area that generally lacks substantial utility infrastructure, such as water and wastewater distribution and collection systems.

3.2.3.1.2 Tierra del Sol

The Tierra del Sol solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases. Therefore, the Tierra del Sol solar farm would **not result in a direct impact** to population and housing. Construction of the Tierra del Sol solar farm would require up to approximately 120 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to relocate to the area with their families. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to five workers. The additional five workers and their families do not represent a substantial population increase across the Mountain Empire Subregion that would result in people in the area being displaced or requiring additional housing. Indirect impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.2.3.1.3 Rugged

The Rugged solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases. Therefore, the Rugged solar farm would **not result in a direct impact** to population and housing. Construction of the Tierra Del Sol solar farm would require up to approximately 146 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to relocate to the area with their families. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to 20 workers. The additional 20 workers and their families do not represent a substantial population increase across the Mountain Empire Subregion that would result in people in the area being displaced or requiring additional housing. Indirect impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.2.3.1.4 LanEast

The LanEast solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases. Therefore, the LanEast solar farm would **not result in a direct impact** to population and housing. Construction of the LanEast solar farm would require up to approximately 30 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to relocate to the area with their families. Once the solar farm is operational, it would employ up to three workers. The additional three workers and their families do not represent a substantial population increase across the Mountain Empire Subregion that would result in people in the area being displaced or requiring additional housing. Indirect impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.2.3.1.5 LanWest

The LanWest solar farm does not include a residential or recreational component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases. Therefore, the LanWest solar farm would **not result in a direct impact** to population and housing. Construction of the LanWest solar farm would require up to approximately 30 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to relocate to the area with their families. Once the solar farm is operational it would employ up to three workers. The additional three workers and their families do not represent a substantial population increase across the Mountain Empire Subregion that would result in people in the area being displaced or require additional housing. Indirect impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.2.3.1.6 Proposed Project

The Proposed Project does not propose any residential use, included but not limited to a residential subdivision, mobile home park, or construction for a single-family residence that would cause an increase in population. The Proposed Project also does not include a recreational component, such as a hotel, resort, campground, or other facility that would attract or accommodate an increase in visitors to the area that would indirectly cause temporary increases in population. No homes are located within the Proposed Project area. No homes would be displaced by proposed off-site transmission lines. Therefore, the Proposed Project would **not result in direct impacts** to population and housing.

During construction, the Proposed Project would temporarily add up to approximately 146 workers to the region. These workers would not relocate to the area with their families and are not expected to induce substantial population growth in the Mountain Empire and Boulevard area. Once construction is complete, the Proposed Project would add a combined total of up to 31 workers and their families to the local area. The workers and their families would likely reside across the large rural area between Campo and Jacumba. The additional workers and their

families are not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in population in the area that would displace existing people or in the need for expanded public infrastructure in the area. Overall, indirect impacts to population and housing in the area would be **less than significant**.

3.2.3.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

As discussed above, the Proposed Project does not propose any residential use, including but not limited to a residential subdivision, mobile home park, or construction for a single-family residence that would cause an increase in population. The Proposed Project also does not include a recreational component, such as a hotel, resort, campground, or other facility. Therefore, the project would **not contribute to any direct cumulative impact** to population and housing.

Construction of the Proposed Project would require up to approximately 146 construction workers, the majority of which are not expected to relocate to the area with their families. Once operational, the solar farm would employ up to 31 workers. The additional 31 workers and their families do not represent a substantial population increase across the Mountain Empire region that would result in people in the area being displaced. When considered cumulatively with other projects listed on Table 1-12, several of which are residential housing projects, cumulative impacts would be less than significant, since the cumulative need for additional housing for employees at the non-residential development projects would be considered with the additional housing being proposed. Therefore, the combined projects are not expected to cause people or housing to be displaced in the area, and indirect impacts are considered **less than significant**.

3.2.3.3 Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts to population and housing. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.2.3.4 Conclusion

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts to population and housing.

**Table 3.2.1-1
Local and Regional Parks**

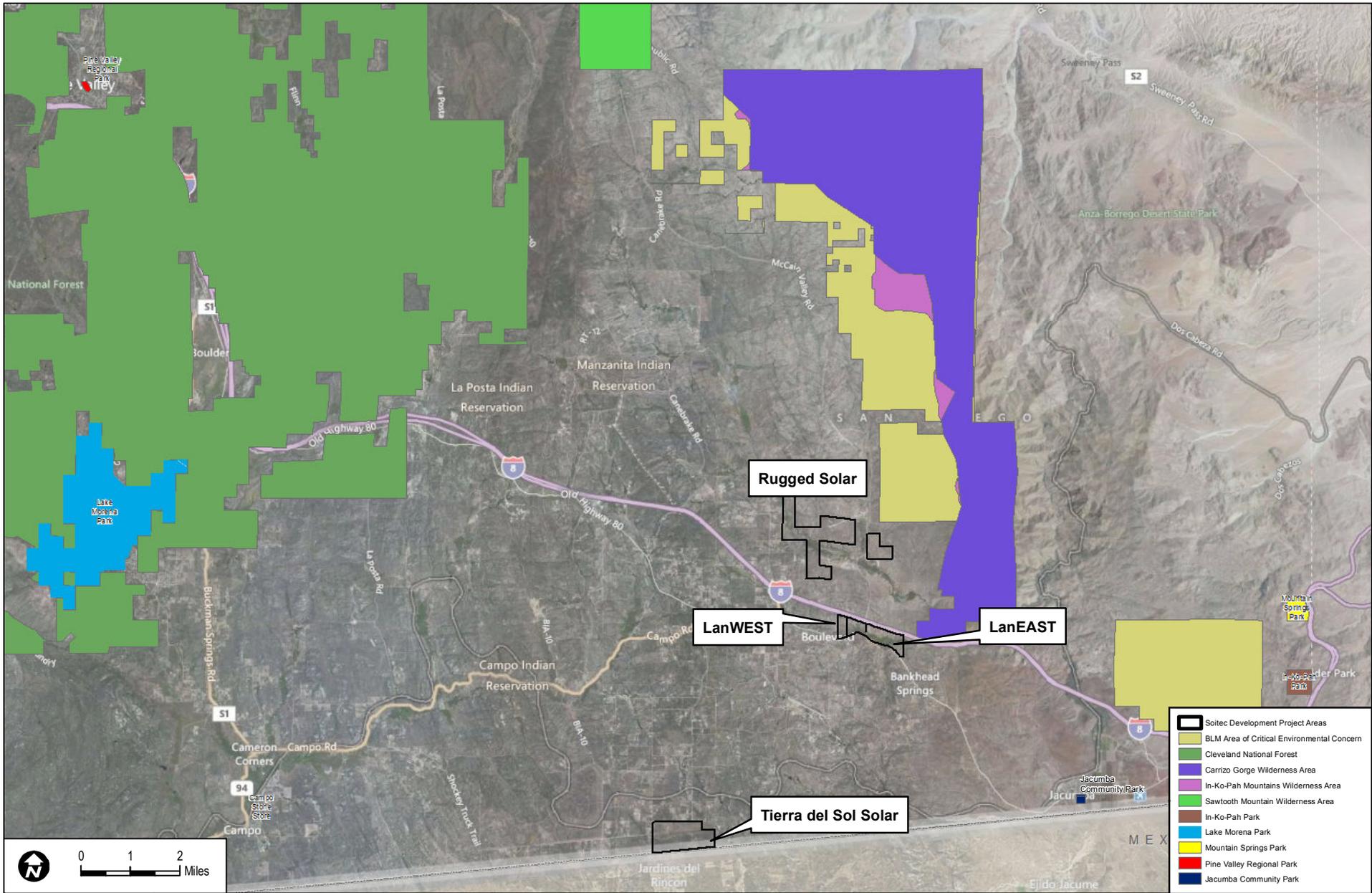
Park	Acreage	Approximate Distance to Project Site	Jurisdiction	Description
<i>Mountain Empire Subregion – Regional Parks</i>				
John Lyons – Lake Morena Park	3,250 acres	9 miles	County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation	Lakefront park with facilities for camping, fishing, hiking, and entrance to the Pacific Crest Trail.
Mountain Springs Park	137 acres	0.25 mile	County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation	Undeveloped land adjacent to Anza-Borrego State Park to be preserved as open space for future needs.

**Table 3.2.1-1
Local and Regional Parks**

Park	Acreage	Approximate Distance to Project Site	Jurisdiction	Description
In-Ko-Pah Park	159.65 acres	8 miles	County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation	Undeveloped land adjacent to Anza-Borrego State Park to be preserved as open space for future needs.
Pine Valley Park	17.07 acres	16 miles	County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation	Facilities include family and group picnic areas, play areas, ball fields, a tennis court, and horseshoe and shuffleboard courts.
<i>Jacumba Planning Area – Local Parks</i>				
Jacumba Community Park	20 acres	4 miles		Undeveloped land that is intended to be developed with local park facilities.

Source: County of San Diego 2011.

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