



County of San Diego

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION DOCUMENTATION

DATE: August 13, 2015

PROJECT NAME: EL MONTE SAND MINING AND NATURE PRESERVE

PROJECT NUMBER(S): PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001

PROJECT APPLICANT: El Monte Nature Preserve LLC, 1335 San Lucas Court, Solana Beach, CA 92075; Attn: Mr. Bill Adams

ENV. REVIEW NUMBER: PDS2015-ER-98-14-016B

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project would extract up to 18 million tons (12-million cubic yards) of mineral resource over a 15-year period with an additional four years required to complete the reclamation activities. As mining is completed in phases, the site will be progressively reclaimed and restored to an end use of open space with an open water pond and recreational trail easements. The combined mineral extraction and reclamation project will affect approximately 188.6 acres. This includes a 167-acre mining footprint, 18 acres of previously excavated golf course pond areas that would be backfilled, and the remaining acreage for haul roads and trails. The total Major Use Permit boundary is nearly 530 acres on land currently owned by Helix Water District. The proposed sand mining operation would include an aggregate processing facility, all support structures and buildings in the form of scales, scale house module and storage containers. Setbacks of 100 feet in width will be established along El Monte and Willow Roads prior to commencing operations. A maximum production limit of 1,000,000-cubic yards of Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) grade aggregate is proposed in any calendar year; however, annual production from the site is anticipated to average 667,000-cubic yards.

The project will be developed in four mining phases of approximately 26, 56, 48, and 36 acres (each number is rounded to the nearest acre), respectively, and will generally proceed in an east to west direction. The first phase will involve mining to create a sub-grade pad approximately 10 feet below the existing ground surface for location of a portable processing plant, development of the initial extraction area and the installation of a channel erosion control structure (drop structure) on the eastern edge of the project site. This drop structure will be located approximately 300 feet west of the property line shared with residences located next to

El Monte Road and will serve as an erosion control device to prevent head cutting of the San Diego River channel to the east. Extractive operations would include the use of wheeled, front-end-loaders to mine the materials to approximately five feet above the water table at which time a dragline will be used to mine the remaining materials to full depth of approximately 90 feet below current grade. The wheeled loaders will move the mined materials directly to the processing plant which will be located near the active cut. The processing plant will be re-located occasionally as the project proceeds west. Wash fines (silt and clay) will be used to fill three surface depressions created during initial grading activities for golf course ponds. These pond areas are located to the east of the extraction area and will be backfilled with slightly more than 500,000 cubic yards of wash fines which will be transported by truck and/or pumped using a slurry pipe beginning with phase 1. Extraction activities on each phase are anticipated to last three to five years.

Reclamation will be completed for each specific phase after completion of mining in that area. Reclamation will include establishment of all final slopes, placement of fill to create a series of benches adjacent to the extraction pond, revegetation, weed control, and monitoring. A series of three, 36-foot wide benches progressing outward from the water edge would be established to support wetland and upland vegetative habitats that are present in the area. Benches will also allow the habitats to expand or contract as natural fluctuation in the water elevation occurs over time. Each bench will be approximately 36 feet wide, total, with 30 feet of a gently sloped to flat surface separated by a 3-foot high slope at a 2H: 1V ratio. These benches will be constructed on a continuing basis from wash fines produced during the processing of the mined materials, and will follow the mining operation as it proceeds west. After final grading, a top dressing will be applied and each bench planted with a specific native seed mix identified in the Reclamation Plan. Final grading will begin after mining is complete within a given area and extractive operations proceed to the west. Planting of graded areas will be conducted as final landforms are established and become available for revegetation. This procedure will result in the majority of the disturbed lands being reclaimed by the time extractive operations are complete. Following the cessation of extractive operations, all equipment and temporary structures will be removed from the project site. Remaining access road segments and operational related disturbance will be scarified and graded to the final reclamation contours and then revegetated.

Sand excavation and processing operations and sales of aggregate would be conducted on weekdays between 7 A.M. and 5 P.M. Sales of aggregate would also be conducted on Saturdays between 7 A.M. and 1 P.M.

Water usage depends on production volume; however, the project's estimated water usage assumes the maximum annual production of 1.5-million tons. Water required for dust control, watering of outgoing loads, and for the processing equipment is estimated at 132 acre-feet annually for this production rate. The project would obtain its water from onsite wells and ponds once sand extraction activities extend below the water table. The project will have portable toilets and no sewer and/or septic systems are required. No extension of sewer or water utilities will be required by the project.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project is between El Monte Road and Willow Road approximately 0.5 to 2.25 miles northeast of the El Monte Road and Lake Jennings Park Road intersection, in the Lakeside Community Planning Area within the unincorporated area of San Diego County.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The County has determined that a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be prepared for the proposed El Monte Sand Mining and Nature Preserve. This SEIR will build off of the EIR that was certified for the El Capitan Golf Course on the same project site. Section 15162(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Subsequent EIR should be prepared if substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.

The SEIR will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, as amended. Based on the County's preliminary analysis of the project, the following environmental issues will be examined in the SEIR::

- Aesthetic Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation/traffic

Additional detail and rationale for requiring analysis of the above issues is provided in the attached Environmental Review Update Checklist Form.

Attachments:

- Project Regional Location Map
- Project Detailed Location Map
- Plot Plan
- Environmental Review Update Checklist Form
- El Capitan Golf Course Final Environmental Impact Report
- Project Description – El Monte Sand Mining and Nature Preserve Project (August, 2015)