

### **3.7 Recreation**

This section describes the existing recreational resources on the project site and in the project area including existing parks and trails that are part of the County's Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP) and Lakeside Community Trails and Pathways Plan, and evaluates the potential impacts to these recreational resources with implementation of the proposed project.

#### **3.7.1 Existing Conditions**

##### **3.7.1.1 Trails**

The project site is currently vacant with disturbed and undisturbed undeveloped land in the San Diego River floodplain. The project site and surrounding area consists of rural agricultural lands and single-family dwellings placed within a broad floodplain consisting of the San Diego River channel contained by steeply sloping valley sidewalls. There is currently unauthorized use of the project site by equestrians, bicyclists, and pedestrians; however, there are no dedicated trails on the project site. As shown on Figure 3.7-1, the project site and surrounding area does include several planned trail alignments that are part of the County's CTMP (San Diego County 2009a-b). The following CTMP trail segments are within and surrounding the project site:

- D: San Diego River Park Regional Trail – This segment is part of the 52-mile-long San Diego River Park system, which is a planned regional trail from the community of Pacific Beach to Julian. The segment of this trail within Lakeside is approximately 8.5 miles long; however, the trail does not yet exist in El Monte Valley.
- 03: Flume Trail – This segment will provide a connection from El Monte Valley to Lake Jennings, Blossom Valley, El Monte Park, and the El Capitan Reservoir along the historic flume alignment. This trail exists from El Monte Road near the western end of the project site, east to El Monte County Park.
- 05: El Monte Road Pathway – This segment will provide a connection from Lake Jennings to El Monte Park and the El Capitan Reservoir along a designated scenic corridor. This segment has not yet been developed.
- 06: Willow Road –The western portion of this segment is a heavily used community pathway paralleling the San Diego River, but it does not yet exist in El Monte Valley in the vicinity of the project site.
- 07: El Monte/Willow Connector Trail – This segment does not yet exist but will provide a connection across the San Diego River.

- 09: Doc Herring Ranch Trail – This segment does not yet exist will provide a connection from Cactus Park to the El Monte Road Pathway (05).
- 10: Ashwood – This segment does not yet exist but will provide crossing over the San Diego River.
- 41: Power Pole Trail– This segment does not yet exist but will provide a connection from Willow Road (06) to the Trans County Trail to the north.
- 61: Dairy Road – This segment is a dirt road providing a crossing over/through the San Diego River, but an official trail does not yet exist.
- 121: Flume/El Monte Park Trail – This segment does not yet exist but would provide a connection from the El Monte River Trail to El Monte Park and the El Monte Road Pathway (05).
- 127: Willow Road Extension – This segment does not currently exist but would provide an alternative crossing of the San Diego River and create a loop with the El Monte Road Pathway (05).
- 131: El Monte River Trail – This trail would parallel the San Diego River Park Regional Trail and run through the project site. The trail does not yet exist in the vicinity of or on the project site.

### **3.7.1.2 Recreational Resources**

Public parks and other recreational resources in the vicinity of the project site include the following:

- Louis Stelzer County Park. This 310-acre park is located north of the westernmost portion of the project site approximately 0.80-mile north of Willow Road, and includes oak woodland and coastal sage scrub habitats. Birdwatching, hiking, picnicking, playground, and barbeque activities are all available (San Diego County 2015a).
- Cactus County Park. This 60-acre park is located approximately 0.5 mile west of the westernmost portion of the project site and includes 1 mile of trails, ball fields used for baseball and softball, a BMX track and a radio-controlled model airplane air strip (San Diego County 2015b).
- El Monte County Park. This 88-acre park is located approximately 0.9-mile northeast of the easternmost portion of the project site and includes a range of recreational opportunities including a ball field, play areas, and seven picnic areas, as well as two popular wedding locations (San Diego County 2015c).

- El Capitan Preserve. The preserve is approximately 2.3 miles north of the project site and has 8 miles of trails on approximately 2,619 acres of open space that includes woodland, coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral habitat (San Diego County 2015d).
- El Capitan Reservoir. The reservoir was created by the El Capitan Dam, and is located approximately 3 miles east of the project site. It provides recreational opportunities for permitted fishing and water sports (City of San Diego 2015).
- Lake Jennings Recreational Area. This recreational area is approximately 2 miles southeast of the project site and offers camping, boating, picnicking, fishing, and hiking (Lake Jennings 2016).
- Tumbleweed Riding Club. The riding club is located adjacent to and north of Willow Road, at the western end of the project site. Tumbleweed Riding Club is a non-profit organization that provides a venue for horsemen, classes, and shows, and requires paid memberships (Tumbleweed 2016).
- El Capitan Equestrian Center (also called the Lakeside Equestrian Facility). This facility is an equestrian center located approximately 1 mile west of the project site. The El Capitan Equestrian Center is situated on four acres of land and offers horse boarding, training, and lessons (El Capitan Equestrian Center 2014).
- Lindo Lake Park and Lakeside Community Center. The Lindo Lake Park and Lakeside Community Center are located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the project site. It provides group picnic areas, a covered dance area, a skate park, a children's playground, a softball field, horseshoe pits, fishing areas, and tennis courts. The Lakeside Community Center sits on the shoreline of Lindo Lake, and provides a variety of classes and special events, including parties, meetings, and wedding ceremonies (San Diego County 2015e; San Diego County 2015f).
- Lakeside Linkage Preserve. The Lakeside Linkage Preserve is located approximately 1.7 miles southwest of the project site. It consists of a trail that leads to the Whitaker House, a well-known Lakeside landmark. The Lakeside Linkage Preserve includes a vegetation community that supports several sensitive species (San Diego County 2015g).
- Rios Baseball Park. The Rios Baseball Park is located approximately 1.7 miles southeast of the project site just north of Interstate-8. The park provides six baseball fields and parking for the District 41, Rios Canyon Baseball league (Eteamz 2016).

- Flinn Springs Regional Park. Flinn Springs Regional Park is located approximately 2 miles south of the project site. The 40-acre park features 2.5 miles of multi-use trails, play areas, baseball fields, picnic areas, wedding and event venues, and public restrooms (County of San Diego 2015h).
- Stoneridge Preserve. The Stoneridge Preserve is located approximately 4.5 miles south of the project site. The Stoneridge Preserve is open to the public and is part of the San Diego South County MSCP preserve system. The Stoneridge Preserve contains various vegetative and wildlife communities (San Diego County 2015i).

### **3.7.1.3 Regulatory Framework**

#### Federal

There are no applicable federal regulations pertaining to recreation.

#### State

##### *Quimby Act*

The Quimby Act (California Planning, Zoning, and Development Laws, Section 66477) was passed in 1975; its goal was to require developers to help mitigate the impacts of property improvements and gives authority for passage of land dedication ordinances only to cities and counties. Special districts must work with cities, and/or counties to receive parkland dedication and/or in-lieu fees. The fees must be paid and land conveyed directly to the public agencies that provide park and recreation services communitywide. The Act was amended in 1982 (AB 1600), requiring agencies to clearly show a reasonable relationship between the public need for the recreation facility or park land and the type of development project upon which the fee is imposed (Westrup 2002).

Previously, developer fees paid could only be used by cities and counties for parks that served the developer's proposed subdivisions. However, an amendment to the Quimby Act (Assembly Bill [AB] 1359) was passed in 2013 that allows cities and counties to use developer-paid Quimby Act fees to provide parks in neighborhoods other than the one in which developer's subdivision is located if certain requirements are met:

1. The neighborhood where the city or county is proposing to use the fees to provide parks must have fewer than 3 acres of park area per 1,000 members.
2. The neighborhood where the proposed subdivision is located must have at least 3 acres of park area or more per 1,000 members.

3. The city or county must hold a public hearing before using the fees in another neighborhood.
4. The city or county must find it reasonably foreseeable that the new subdivision's residents will use the park facilities in the other neighborhood.
5. And finally, the city or county must use the fees in areas consistent with the city or county's local Quimby Act ordinance and General Plan (Best et al. 2013).

AB 1359 also allows a city or county to enter into a joint or shared use agreement with one or more public districts in order to provide additional park and recreational access (Best et al. 2013).

### Local

#### *San Diego County Park Lands Dedication Ordinance*

The County Park Lands Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) is included in County Code Sections 810.101 through 810.114 and provides the mechanism for implementing the Quimby Act. The PLDO was adopted to meet the park and recreational needs of residents in unincorporated San Diego County (San Diego County 2016).

#### *San Diego County Trails Program Community Trails Master Plan*

The County CTMP was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2005 (San Diego County 2005). The purpose of the CTMP is to guide community trail development and management in unincorporated County. The CTMP includes flexibility to allow communities to amend their individual trails plans to accommodate changing needs without having to amend the County General Plan. Countywide aspects of the CTMP include trail types, design and construction guidelines, and management and implementation strategies developed by a Trails Program Management Team (TPMT) with staff from County Parks and Recreation, Planning and Land Use (now called Planning & Development Services), and Public Works. These three County departments are responsible for managing trails, as described in the CTMP (County of San Diego 2005).

#### *Lakeside Community Trails and Pathways Plan*

The County CTMP is divided into Community/Subregional Plan Areas. The Lakeside Community Trails and Pathways Plan incorporates objectives and goals of the CTMP within a scope specific to the Lakeside Community. The Lakeside Community Trails and Pathway Plan develops a system of interconnected regional and community trails and pathways to address an

established public need for recreation. It identifies existing and future trails and pathways within and surrounding El Monte Valley, which are shown on Figure 3.7-1.

These trail alignments are discussed above within Section 3.7.1.1, and include, but are not limited to, the San Diego River Park Regional Trail (D), El Monte Valley River Trail (131), SD River Crossing (07), Power Pole Trail (41), El Monte Road Pathway (05), and Willow Road Pathway (06) (County of San Diego 2009a).

### *San Diego County General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element*

The County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element is intended to address the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, mineral deposits, and open space. Related conservation and open space goals and policies are summarized below.

Goal COS-6. Sustainable Agricultural Industry. A viable and long-term agricultural industry and sustainable agricultural land uses in the County of San Diego that serve as a beneficial resource and contributor to the County's rural character and open space network.

#### Policies

COS-6.3 Compatibility with Recreation and Open Space. Encourage siting recreational and open space uses and multi-use trails that are compatible with agriculture adjacent to the agricultural lands when planning for development adjacent to agricultural land uses.

Goal COS-21: Park and Recreational Facilities. Park and recreation facilities that enhance the quality of life and meet the diverse active and passive recreational needs of County residents and visitors, protect natural resources, and foster an awareness of local history, with approximately ten acres of local parks and 15 acres of regional parks provided for every 1,000 persons in the unincorporated County.

#### Policies

COS-21.1 Diversity of Users and Services. Provide parks and recreation facilities that create opportunities for a broad range of recreational experiences to serve user interests.

COS-21.5 Connections to Trails and Networks. Connect public parks to trails and pathways and other pedestrian or bicycle networks where feasible to provide linkages and connectivity between recreational uses.

Goal COS-22. Park and Recreational Services. High-quality parks and recreation programs that promote the health and well-being of County residents while meeting the needs of a diverse and growing population.

#### Policies

COS-22.1 Variety of Recreational Programs. Provide and promote a variety of high quality active and passive recreation programs that meet the needs of and benefit County residents.

Goal COS-23 Recreational Opportunities in Preserves. Acquisition, monitoring, and management of valuable natural and cultural resources where public recreational opportunities are compatible with the preservation of those resources.

#### Policies

COS-23.1 Public Access. Provide public access to natural and cultural (where allowed) resources through effective planning that conserves the County's native wildlife, enhances and restores a continuous network of connected natural habitat and protects water resources.

### **3.7.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance**

The County does not have specified guidelines for determining the significance of recreation and, therefore, the recreation analysis will be entirely based upon the significance criteria stated in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact to recreation would occur if the proposed project would:

1. 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;
2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse effect on the environment.

#### **3.7.2.1 Issue 1: Physical Deterioration of Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities**

#### Analysis

The proposed project does not include new residential uses, and would not create new demand on existing park and recreational space. While the addition of the proposed trails and pathways could attract more hikers, bicyclists, and equestrian users in the project area, the use is not anticipated to be excessive and there are no reasons to anticipate that the proposed project would indirectly

cause substantial deterioration to existing recreational facilities. Thus, the proposed project would result in a **less than significant impact** associated with the physical deterioration of existing park and recreational facilities.

### **3.7.2.2 Issue 2: Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities**

#### Analysis

Implementation of the proposed project would include a new recreational trail system. As shown on Figure 3.7-2, the proposed project would include an onsite trail system to provide residents and the community with opportunities for equestrian, bicycling, and pedestrian activities on and through the project site, as well as contribute to the expansion of and linkage to the County's trail system. Proposed trails would consist of both Type C Primitive Trails and Type D Pathways. Type C Primitive Trails would be designed to be 3 feet wide within a 25-foot-wide easement. Type D Pathways would be 10 to 12 feet wide within a 20-foot-wide easement. Type D pathways would be constructed during Phase I, and Type C trails would be constructed after mining has been completed in Phase 4. See Figure 3.7-2 for Phasing Plan. A 20-foot-wide trail easement would be located over an existing trail in the northwestern corner of the project site (Figure 3.7-2). A trail staging area, which would include horse trailer parking, would be located in the southwestern portion of the project site and would be available for use after Phase 4.

The construction of trails and the trail staging area are part of the proposed project, and therefore the impacts related to the proposed trail system have been considered throughout the discussion of environmental impacts in this document. As discussed in other sections of this EIR, all potential physical impacts applicable to the proposed trail system would be mitigated to the extent feasible by the measures provided in other sections of Chapter 2 of this EIR. Therefore, the construction of the proposed trail system would not result in any additional construction impacts beyond those addressed elsewhere in this EIR, and would not necessitate construction of additional offsite recreational facilities. Thus, impacts regarding the construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be **less than significant**.

### **3.7.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

#### Issue 1: Physical Deterioration of Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities

The geographic context for cumulative impacts to recreational facilities is the community of Lakeside. The Recreation Element of the County General Plan provides goals for meeting community demands for recreational parks throughout the County. Specific recommendations and priorities for the use of park fees pursuant to the County's PLDO are established so that such funds may be efficiently utilized throughout the County. The cumulative projects identified within Table 1-11 may result in a significant cumulative impact on recreational sources

due to degradation of existing facilities within Lakeside if these projects would not provide recreational facilities to serve the residents of Lakeside or would not contribute to the County park fees.

The proposed project's trail system would contribute to the expansion of and linkage to the County's CTMP trail system, as shown on Figures 3.7-1 and 3.7-2. Trails and pathways in the eastern portion of the project site would overlay the Dairy Road trail (61), and provide connections to the El Monte Road Pathway (05) to the south, and to the Willow Road Pathway (06) and Willow Road Extension (127) to the north. The proposed Type D Pathway in the northwestern portion of the project site would provide a linkage to the San Diego River Park Regional Trail (D) and a separately proposed future trail within a County trail easement on City land. The proposed 20-foot-Wide Easement Over Existing Trail in the northwestern portion of the project site would provide a future connection to the El Monte Valley River Trail (131) and the Willow Road Pathway (06). The proposed Type D Pathway in the southwestern portion of the project site would provide a connection to the El Monte Road Pathway (05).

The development of the proposed onsite trail system would provide more hiking, bicycling, and equestrian opportunities in the Lakeside Community Plan area. With the proposed trail system connecting to the County's CTMP trail system, the proposed project would comply with the option to dedicate land to the County for recreational use. Therefore, the proposed project would meet the requirements established by the PLDO for adequate parkland dedication, and thereby would reduce potential project impacts, including potential cumulative impacts on local recreational facilities. As all past, present, and future residential projects within the Lakeside community and within the region would be required to comply with the requirements of the PLDO, the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative impacts on recreational resources in the Lakeside Community Plan area or to the larger San Diego region. Thus, the proposed project **would not contribute to any potential cumulative impact associated with deterioration of existing parks and recreational facilities.**

## Issue 2: Construction or Expansion of Parks and Recreational Facilities

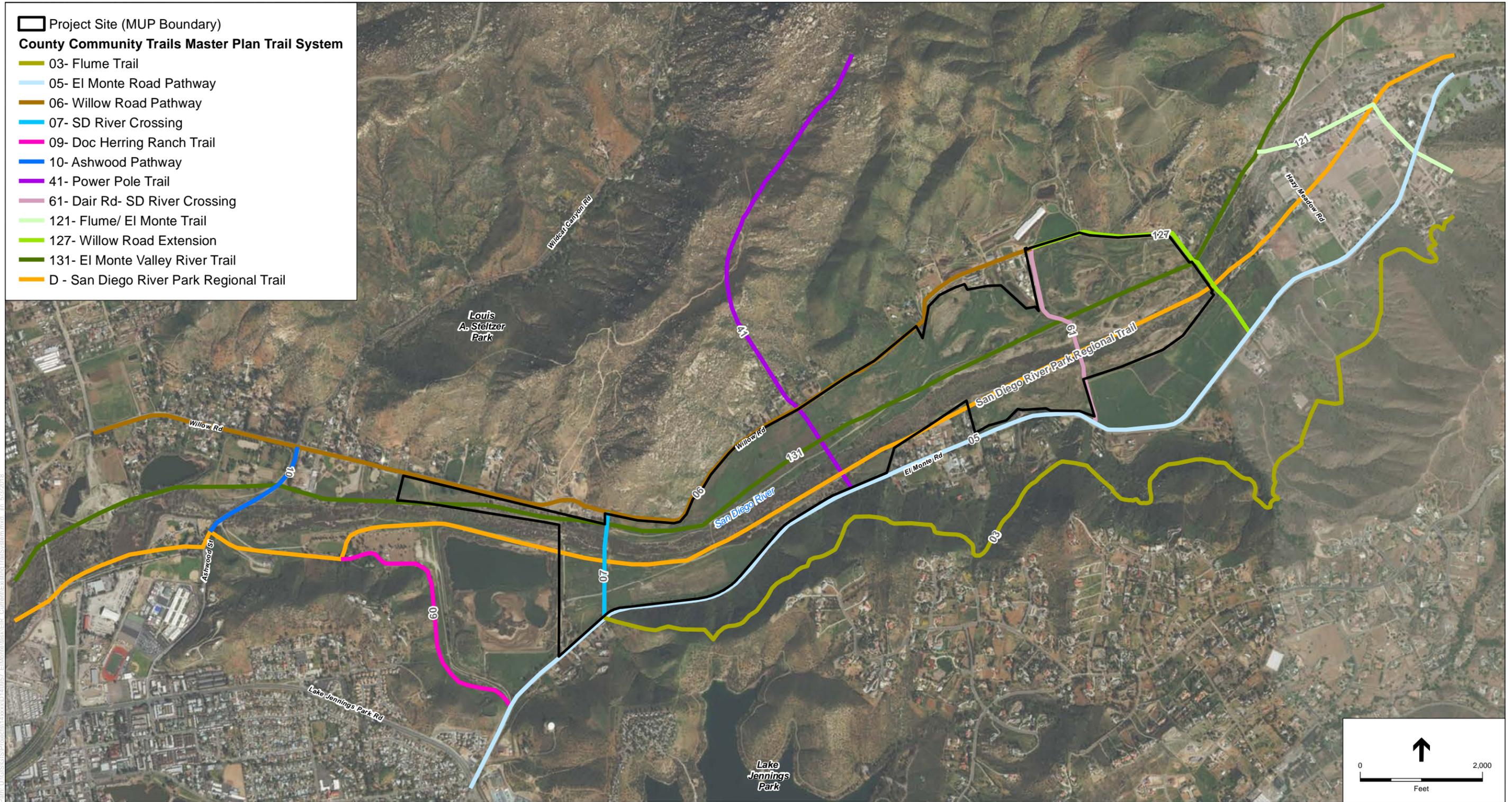
The geographic context for cumulative impacts to recreational facilities is the community of Lakeside. Similar to implementation of the proposed project, other cumulative projects that would include construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be responsible for mitigating the physical environmental impacts of the proposed recreational facilities as required by the County and CEQA. Therefore, proposed project impacts related to adverse effects from the construction of recreational facilities are **not considered cumulatively considerable.**

### **3.7.4 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation**

As discussed above, no significant impacts related to recreational facilities would result from the proposed project. Thus, no mitigation is required.

### **3.7.5 Conclusion**

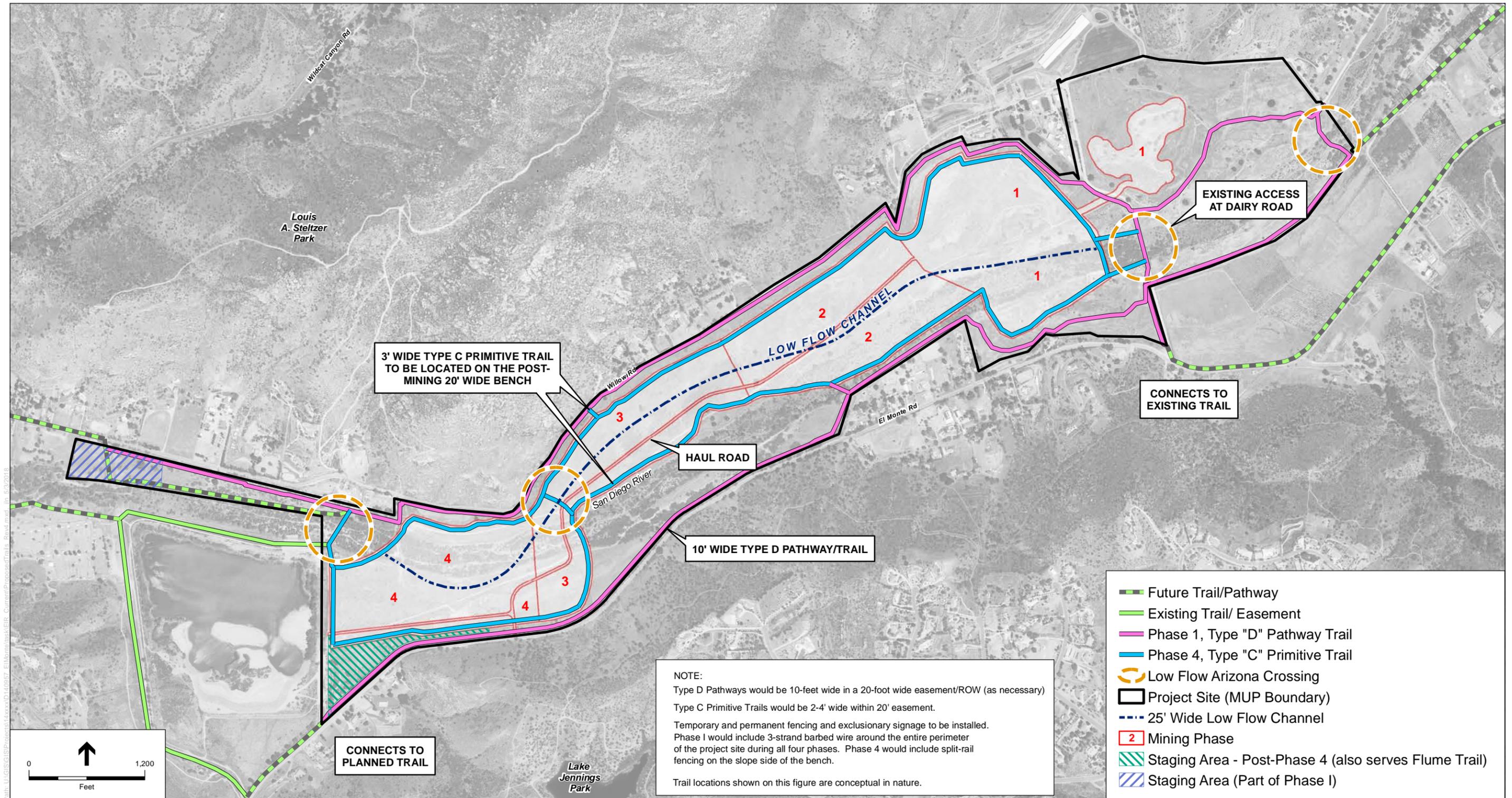
The proposed project would construct trails and pathways within the project site, and provide connections with the County's CTMP. These trails and pathways would be available to equestrian, bicyclist, and pedestrian users. The development of trails and pathways associated with implementation of the proposed project would not result in the deterioration of existing parks or other recreation facilities, and would provide additional recreational opportunities to existing and future trail users. The construction of trails and pathways is part of the proposed project, and therefore the construction impacts have been considered throughout this EIR. No significant impacts to recreational resources were identified. Therefore, no mitigation is required.



SOURCE: ESRI; EnviroMine; The Altum Group; Chang Consultants; ESA; SanGIS; SD County General Plan/Lakeside Community

El Monte Sand Mining Project, 140957

**Figure 3.7-1**  
County Community Trails Master Plan Trail System



**NOTE:**  
 Type D Pathways would be 10-foot wide in a 20-foot wide easement/ROW (as necessary)  
 Type C Primitive Trails would be 2-4' wide within 20' easement.  
 Temporary and permanent fencing and exclusionary signage to be installed.  
 Phase I would include 3-strand barbed wire around the entire perimeter of the project site during all four phases. Phase 4 would include split-rail fencing on the slope side of the bench.  
 Trail locations shown on this figure are conceptual in nature.

- Future Trail/Pathway
- Existing Trail/ Easement
- Phase 1, Type "D" Pathway Trail
- Phase 4, Type "C" Primitive Trail
- Low Flow Arizona Crossing
- ▭ Project Site (MUP Boundary)
- 25' Wide Low Flow Channel
- ▭ Mining Phase
- ▨ Staging Area - Post-Phase 4 (also serves Flume Trail)
- ▨ Staging Area (Part of Phase I)

SOURCE: ESRI; ESA

El Monte Sand Mining Project, 140957  
**Figure 3.7-2**  
 Proposed Onsite Trail System