# ADDENDUM #2
# Nacimiento Water Project Final EIR

## 1. Introduction

This document is an Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) prepared by San Luis Obispo County for the Nacimiento Water Project (NWP). The Final EIR evaluated the potential environmental effects of the NWP, which proposed construction of a water intake pump station at Lake Nacimiento Dam, 45 miles of water transmission pipeline, plus additional water storage tanks and pump stations. The Final EIR was certified in 2004 by San Luis Obispo (SLO) County, which acted as the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (*CEQA Guidelines* (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15300 et. seq.) §15090).

Since the certification of the Final EIR, changes have been made to the project description for the NWP. In 2006 and 2007, design-phase changes were analyzed in Addendum #1, which was prepared and submitted (as a revised document) in November 2007. Addendum #1 concluded that no new significant impacts would occur as a result of the changes in the project. Addendum #2 evaluates minor changes during the implementation phase of the NWP. Under CEQA, an addendum may be prepared when minor modifications are proposed for a project that has already been approved when no additional significant environmental impacts would result (*CEQA Guidelines*, §15164).

## 2. Purpose of Addendum

An addendum does not need to be circulated for public review, but rather can be attached to the final EIR (*CEQA Guidelines* §15164(c)). A brief explanation of the decision not to prepare a subsequent or supplemental EIR should be included in the addendum or elsewhere in the record (*CEQA Guidelines* §15164(e)).

Addendum #2 has been prepared because the proposed modifications to the construction techniques (use of an additional access road) for NWP do not meet the conditions for a subsequent or supplemental EIR. The modifications would not result in new significant environmental impacts or change the conclusions of the previously certified Final EIR.

## 3. Proposed Modification to the Project Description

This Addendum addresses a minor change in construction access to the pipeline in the Stenner Creek/Cuesta Tunnel area (see Figure 1). NWP contractors intend to use the Cuesta Tunnel South Portal access road (see Figure 2). The road traverses State of California property,

INSERT FIGURE 1

INSERT FIGURE 2

a City of San Luis Obispo parcel and a private parcel with an access easement. The County and City of San Luis Obispo also use the road, which is paved and open to the public up to a gate at the water treatment plant at Chorro Reservoir. The road crosses jurisdictional features, but these streams (headwaters to Stenner Creek) are channeled through culverts beneath the road; no changes to these crossings are anticipated as part of the NWP. No physical changes to the South Portal road are anticipated other than routine maintenance. Project use of the South Portal road is thus considered part of the existing environment (CEQA baseline) and not subject to analysis.

However, there is an approximately 540-foot long spur road extending from the South Portal road to the site of the planned pipeline bore pit on the north side of the Union Pacific Railroad Right of Way (see Figure 2). The spur road is steep and narrow. It is being proposed as an access route for pipeline construction activities in the area, and is not within areas surveyed for previous NWP CEQA documents. Limited widening may be necessary. The use and potential grading of the spur road is the proposed modification analyzed in this Addendum.

# 4. Analysis of Potential Environmental Impacts

The proposed modification to the NWP would not result in either new environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously-identified significant effects. It would have no effect on previously identified short-term (construction) and long-term (operational) effects to hydrology and water quality; geology, seismicity, and soils; drainage, erosion, and sedimentation; transportation and circulation; aesthetics and visual resources; or recreational resources. For cultural resources, a reconnaissance survey found no surface evidence of the single cultural site recorded in the vicinity. Implementation of a standard EIR mitigation measure (CR-9) will avoid any impacts.

Biological resources are analyzed at a greater level of detail.

## 4.1 Biological Resources

The area has the potential to support special status species which may be subject to impacts if the spur road is widened. Species of concern include those observed in the general vicinity during previous surveys. These include California Native Plant Society (CNPS) List 1B plants Palmer's spineflower (*Chorizanthe palmeri)*, San Luis mariposa lily (*Calochortus obispoensis*) , San Luis Obispo popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* cf. *uncinatus*), and mouse gray dudleya (*Dudleya abramsii* ssp. *murina*) in addition to the CNPS list 4 plant Brewer's spineflower (*C. breweri*).

A 100-foot-wide corridor centered on spur road was surveyed for this Addendum. Areas with distinct habitat characteristics were delineated and mapped. The overall area of the survey, including the spur road and the hillsides supporting rare plants, consists of non-native grassland, rocky serpentine outcrops, and coast live oak-California bay-toyon riparian woodland associated with the adjacent branch of Stenner Creek. The potential for rare plants in this area is generally associated with the serpentine outcrops.

For the CNPS List 1B plants listed above, important habitat characteristics comprise substantially rocky, open areas (generally at least 40 percent of overall cover but up to 80 percent) with

relatively high species diversity, relatively high representation of native species and relatively low representation of non-native species. Native species common in these areas include needlegrass (*Nassella* sp.), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *foliolosum* ), brodiaea (*Brodiaea* sp.), and a few other species in the Liliaceae family that were not identifiable at the time of the survey, but that were confirmed not to be *Calochortus*. Other native species in these areas include Lord's candle (*Yucca whipplei*) and dwarf plantain (*Plantago erecta*). The most invasive of the non-natives within the survey corridor is yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*).

Areas of vegetation in the survey of the Spur road corridor are shown in Figure 2. A description of each area labeled in Figure 2, and an evaluation of potential for rare species occurrence, is presented below.

**Area 1.** Overall barren rock cover approximately 50 percent. High species diversity; dominant species is native needlegrass. Low to moderate potential for CNPS 1B species. Brewer's spineflower was present in 2008.

**Area 2.** Widened area of disturbance associated with spur road. Nonnative grasses dominant, yellow starthistle and hayfield tarweed abundant; much area barren because of road-associated disturbance. Very low potential for any rare plant species.

**Area 3.** Small area of dense shrubs [sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*)] between rock outcrop and eroded gully. Very low potential for any rare plant species.

**Area 4.** Rock outcrop. High overall cover of barren rock (approximately 50 percent). Portion of area adjacent to road is a habitat for the CNPS 1B species listed above. The dominant species is native needlegrass. The CNPS 1B species have a moderate potential in the steep outcrop area adjacent to the road. However, the outcrop is unobscured visually, and it's likely that these species, or Brewer's spineflower, would have been noticed if present in 2008.

**Area 5.** Nonnative grassland with approximately 20 percent overall cover of barren rocky patches. Typical nonnative grassland characteristics of the area (low species diversity, relatively high occurrence of hayfield tarweed). CNPS 1B species have a low potential to occur; Brewer's spineflower a moderate potential.

**Area 6.** Typical nonnative grassland with subdominance of an unidentified perennial subshrub in the Asteraceae family. Low potential for any rare plant species.

**Area 7.** Typical nonnative grassland with relatively high occurrence of yellow starthistle. Very low potential for any rare plant species.

**Area 8.** Dense coast live oak-California bay-toyon woodland. No potential habitat for rare plant species.

**Area 9.** Nonnative grassland with approximately 20 percent overall cover of barren rocky patches. Typical nonnative grassland characteristics of the area (low species diversity, relatively high occurrence of hayfield tarweed) with a minor presence of native needlegrass and California buckwheat. Low potential for CNPS 1B species or Brewer's spineflower.

**Summary.** The best potential habitat for the species under consideration is found to either side of the road at its southern extent in Areas 1 and 4. These areas provide moderate potential habitat for the CNPS List 1B species discussed and moderate to high potential of occurrence of Brewer's spineflower (CNPS List 4). Area 5 presents moderate habitat for Brewer's spineflower in the transition between the rock outcrop of Area 4 and the nonnative grassland of Area 6. It is unlikely that any of the other areas surveyed in association with the spur road provide habitat for rare plant species.

## 4.2 Biological Resources Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures in the Final EIR (BR-13 through BR-15) are appropriate for avoiding or minimizing impacts to sensitive plants, and include pre-disturbance surveys and flagging for avoidance, or salvaging and relocating plants consistent with the NWP *Vegetation Replacement/Restoration Plan* (Environmental Science Associates, November 2006).

# 5. Conclusion

The proposed modification to the NWP would not result in either new environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously-identified significant effects. No new significant, unavoidable growth-inducing impacts have been identified. Accordingly, under CEQA Section 15164, the use of this Addendum is appropriate. No public circulation or review period is required for an Addendum prepared for a previously circulated and certified Final EIR (CEQA Section 15164(c)). No further action under CEQA is required.

**Prepared by:**

**Thomas A. Roberts, Certified Wildlife Biologist**