Owens River Water Trail Final EIR Overview & Board Recommendation

Inyo County Water Commission
CEQA Adequacy Review

What the Commission Is Being Asked to Do

Assess the adequacy of the FEIR under CEQA

Determine whether environmental impacts are fully disclosed

Recommend certification of the EIR and adoption of mitigation measures

Quick Project Overview

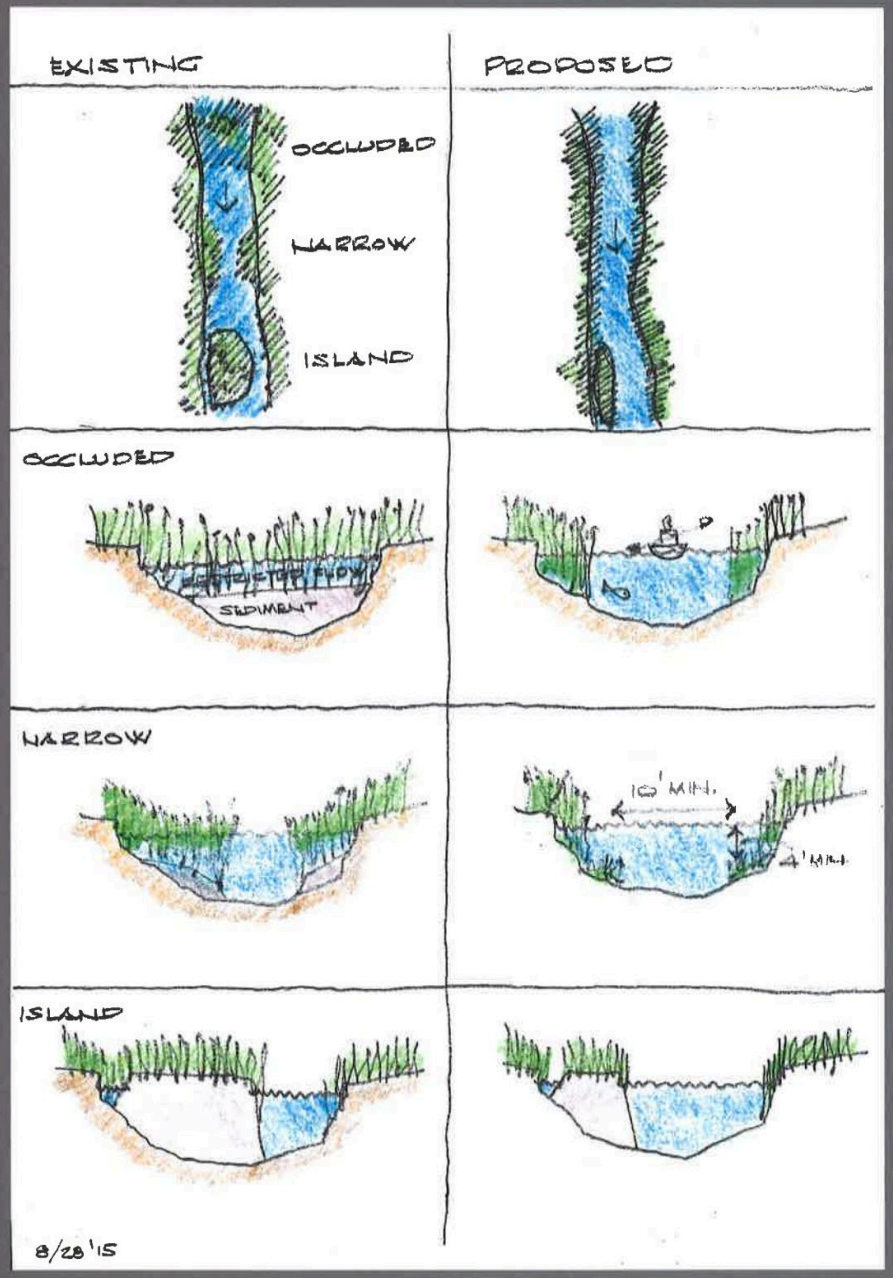
6.3-mile non-motorized water trail on the Lower Owens River for kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards

Establish designate all-abilities launch and take-out locations

Clear river of emergent vegetation blockages to open river to boats access

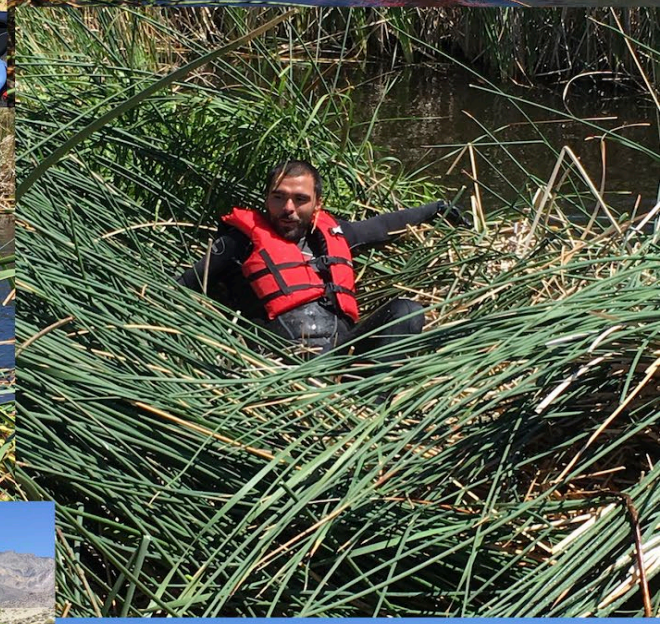

LONE PINE STAGING AREA
boating
hiking
PUMPBACK STATION AREA
boating
fishing
DELTA HABITAT AREA
birding
OWENS RIVER
LP NARROW GAUGE RD
Owens River Water Trail
Proposed Heritage Trail
136
LONE PINE
Recreation Outfitting
KEELER BRIDGE
Interagency Visitor Center
Diaz Lake Campground
Boulder Creek RV Resort
395
LOWER OWENS RIVER RECREATION USE PLAN
Prepared for Inyo County

CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS











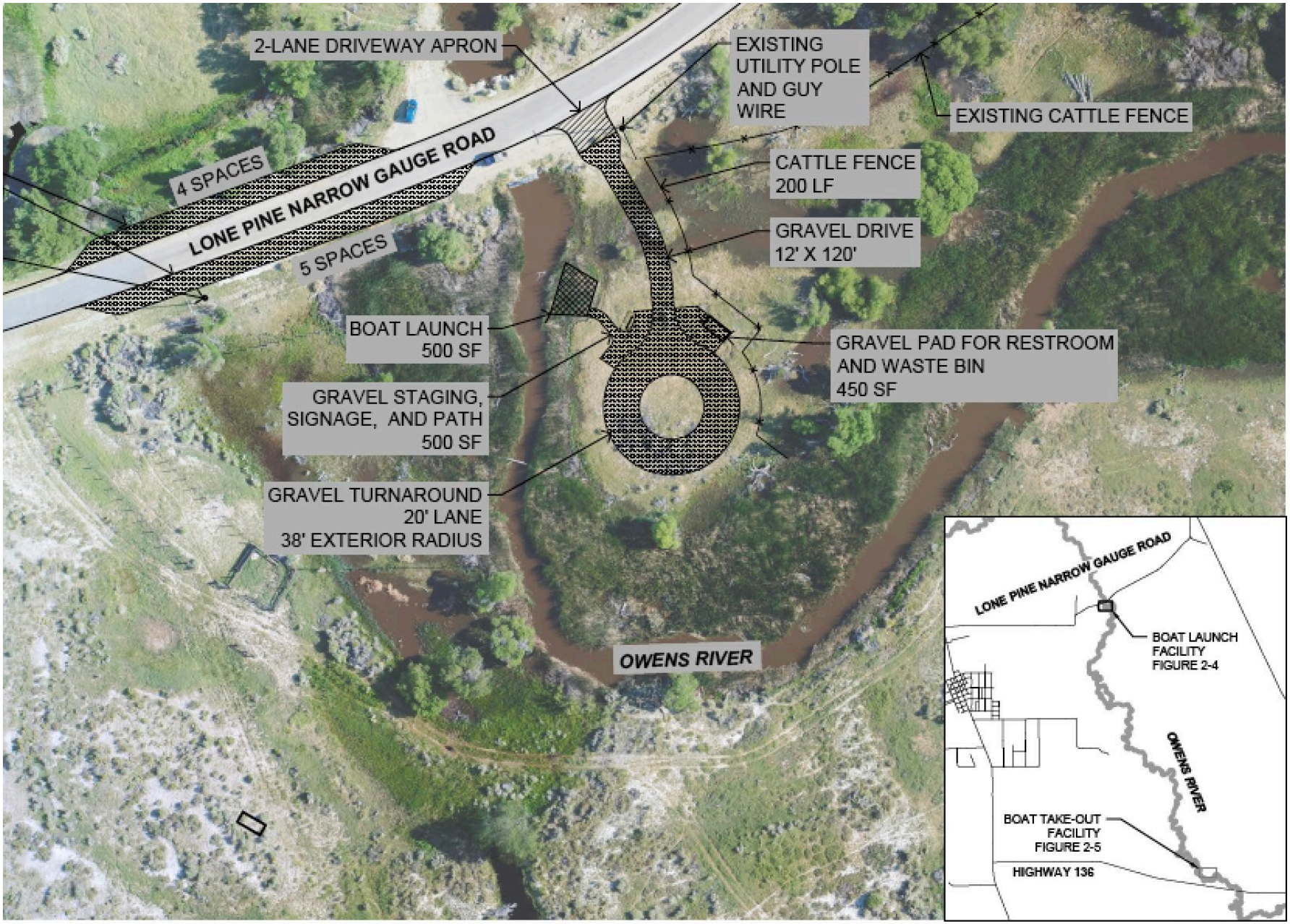

What Gets Built

Selective in-channel vegetation clearing

Removal of localized obstructions

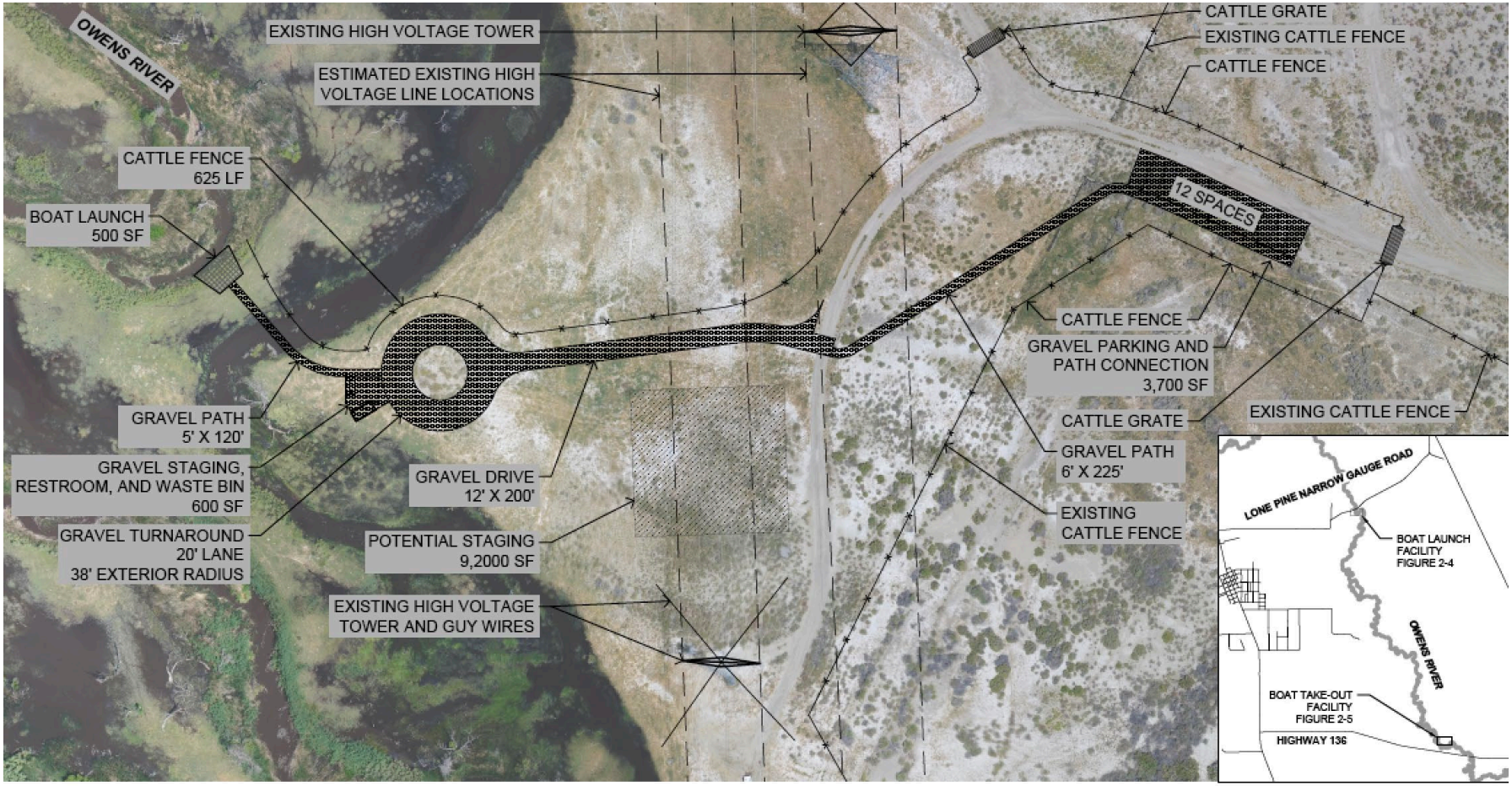
Two ADA-oriented launch/take-out facilities

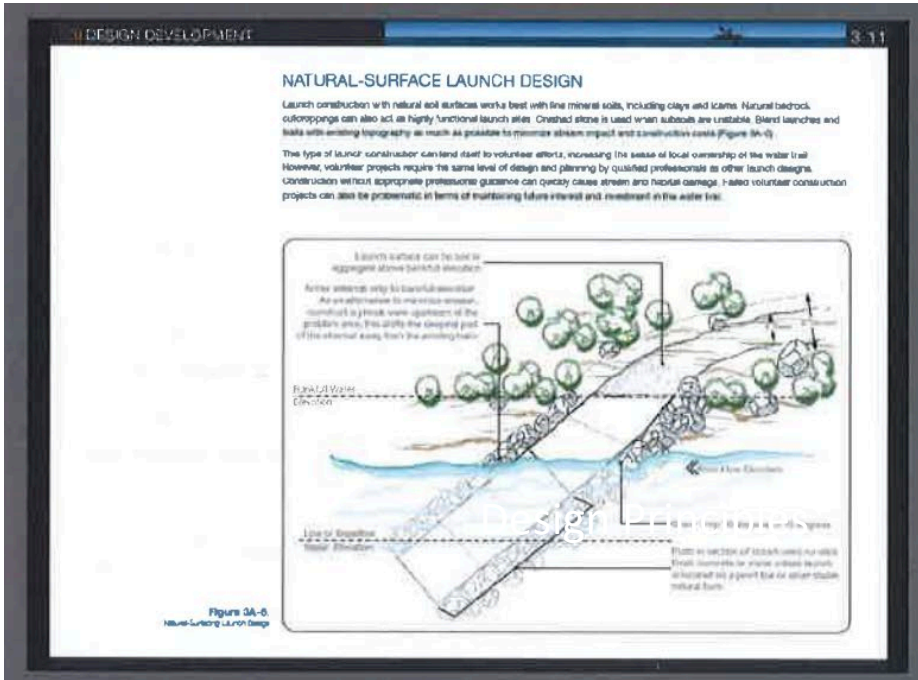
Signage, safety markers, wildlife-proof trash, and vault restroom

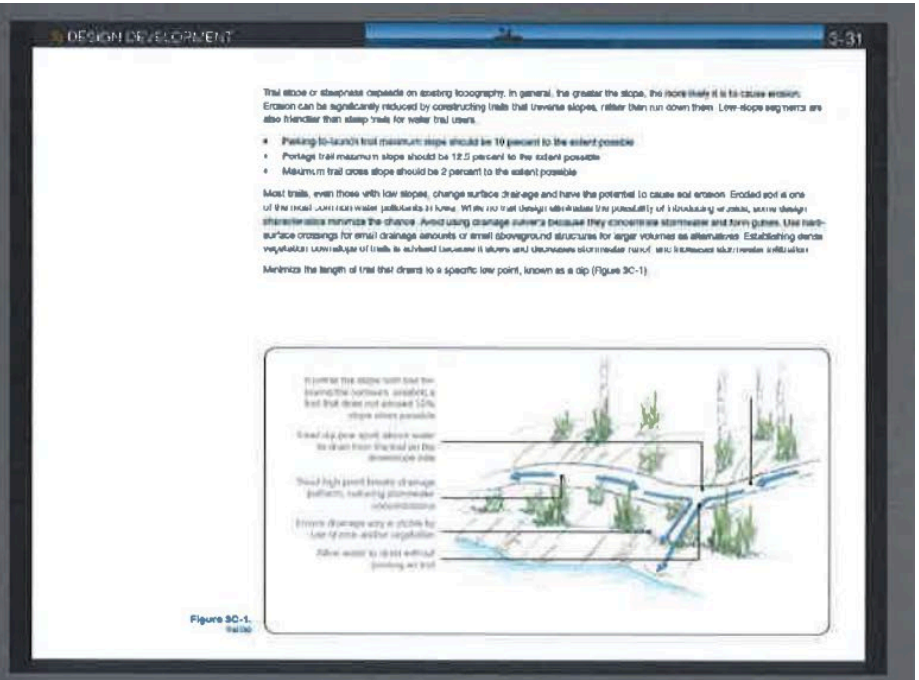


GROUND AERIAL SOURCE: INYO COUNTY

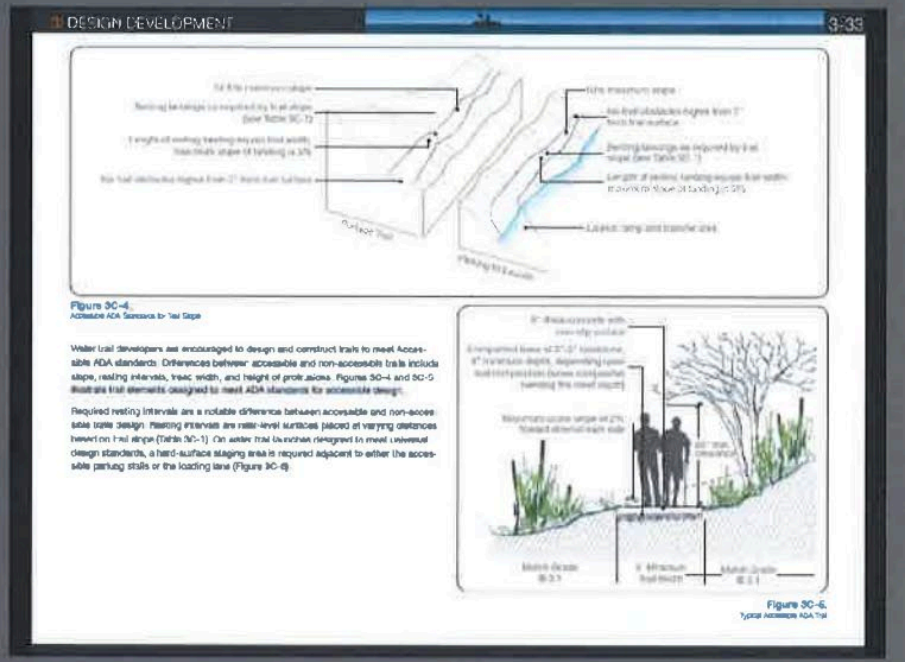
VICINITY MAP


OWENS RIVER
EXISTING HIGH VOLTAGE TOWER
ESTIMATED EXISTING HIGH VOLTAGE LINE LOCATIONS
CATTLE GRATE
EXISTING CATTLE FENCE
CATTLE FENCE
CATTLE FENCE 625 LF
BOAT LAUNCH 500 SF
12 SPACES
CATTLE FENCE
GRAVEL PARKING AND PATH CONNECTION 3,700 SF
GRAVEL PATH 5' X 120'
CATTLE GRATE
EXISTING CATTLE FENCE
GRAVEL STAGING, RESTROOM, AND WASTE BIN 600 SF
GRAVEL DRIVE 12' X 200'
GRAVEL PATH 6' X 225'
EXISTING CATTLE FENCE
GRAVEL TURNAROUND 20' LANE 38' EXTERIOR RADIUS
POTENTIAL STAGING 9,2000 SF
EXISTING HIGH VOLTAGE TOWER AND GUY WIRES
LONE PINE NARROW GAUGE ROAD
BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY FIGURE 2-4
OWENS RIVER
BOAT TAKE-OUT FACILITY FIGURE 2-5
HIGHWAY 136
VICINITY MAP
0 30 60
Feet
BACKGROUND AERIAL SOURCE: INYO COUNTY
INUNDATION: 190 CFS ON JULY 7, 2017





Design Principles

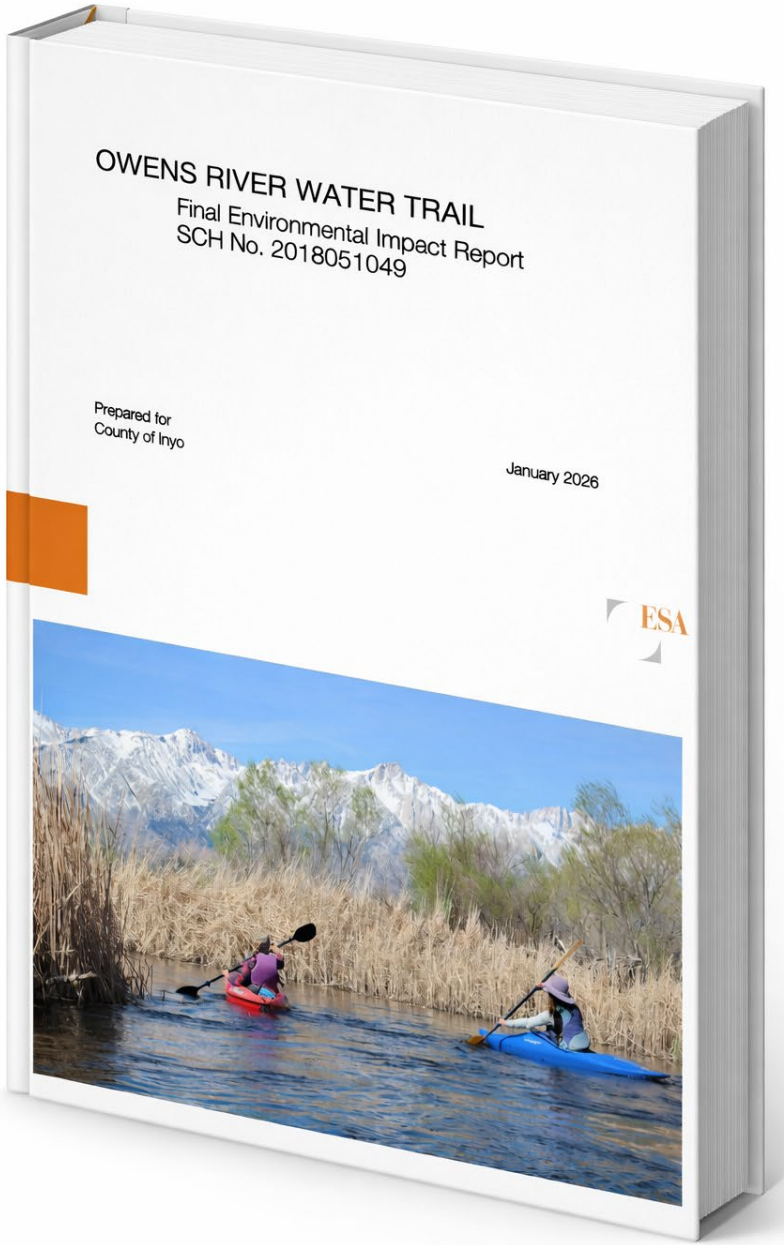


Operations and Maintenance

- Seasonal vegetation cutting only

- No routine excavation of riverbed

- Maintenance intensity declines over time



Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 2
Comments and Responses

Chapter 3
Modifications to the DEIR

Chapter 4
Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Appendix G
Biological Resources Technical Report

CEQA Process and Public Review

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND PUBLIC SCOPING

May 24, 2018 - June 25, 2018

DRAFT EIR CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT

May 8, 2019 - June 21, 2019

30 COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED

FINAL EIR INCLUDES RESPONSES AND REVISIONS

Key Areas of Focus in the EIR

Biological resources and wetlands

Hydrology and water quality

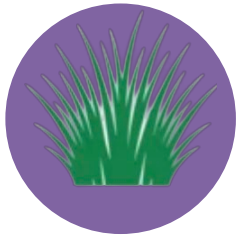
Cultural and paleontological resources

Recreation and ranching compatibility

Biological Resources and Mitigation

PRE-CONSTRUCTION SURVEYS

WORK WINDOWS TO AVOID SENSITIVE PERIODS



REVEGETATION AND RECOVERY MONITORING

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IF RECOVERY FAILS

Construction Methods and Spoils

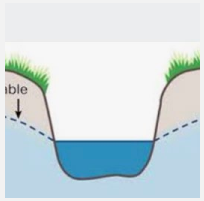
Emergent vegetation removed to restore navigable channel

Excavated material thin-spread in designated areas to compost

Spoils areas monitored for recovery

Hydrology

Analysis assumes conservative surface-water modeling



Multiple data sources show a gaining river reach

Monitoring triggers added for sensitive resources

Cultural Resources Protections

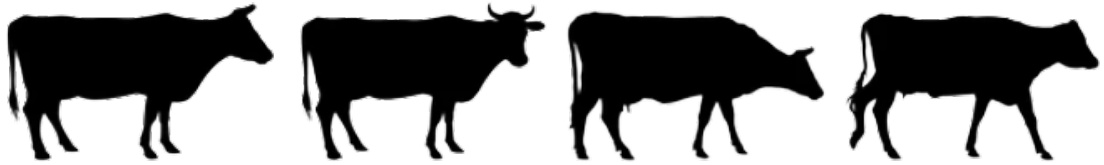
- Qualified archaeologist on site
- Tribal monitor on site
- Worker training
- Inadvertent discovery procedures
- Coordination with Tribes and local museums

Ranching and Recreation Compatibility

What could conflict

Active grazing

Conflicts with cattle (stress, gates/fences, safety)



How impacts are addressed (FEIR/MMRP)

Concentrate use at designated launch/take-out facilities (controlled access)

Seasonal separation (Practice of pasturing winter to spring outside recreation high season)

Signage (stay on water, respect livestock)

Facility design to discourage wandering (defined paths, barriers where needed)

Minimal cattle exclusion fencing at facilities

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

- Identifies each mitigation measure
- Assigns responsibility
- Defines timing and verification
- Requires documentation of compliance

Resource Area	Identified Impact	Mitigation Approach	Monitoring / Enforcement
Biological Resources	Temporary disturbance to riparian vegetation and wetlands from channel clearing, access routes, and spoils placement	Seasonal work windows; avoidance of sensitive resources; revegetation and recovery requirements	Pre- and post-construction surveys; recovery monitoring; escalation if recovery fails
Hydrology / Wetlands	Localized changes in water surface elevation under construction scenarios	Conservative surface-water modeling; reliance on gaining-reach conditions	Monitoring triggers for sensitive vegetation and special-status plants
Cultural Resources	Potential disturbance of unknown archaeological or paleontological resources	Qualified archaeologist oversight; worker training; stop-work procedures; coordination with Tribes and museums	Inadvertent discovery protocols; documentation and notification
Recreation / Land Use	Increased public use and potential conflicts with ranching operations	Designated access points; signage; fencing at facilities where needed	Ongoing site management and compliance with facility design constraints

What Board Certification Means

EIR adequately informs decision-makers

Environmental impacts disclosed and mitigated

Project decisions and approval may proceed separately

Closing

- The Final EIR discloses impacts
- Significant impacts are mitigated
- Monitoring ensures accountability
- Staff recommends certification