

**CALIFORNIA STATE
LANDS COMMISSION***Established in 1938***EXECUTIVE OFFICE**
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Sacramento, CA 95825-8202**JENNIFER LUCCHESI, Executive Officer**
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October 2, 2015

File Ref: W26776

«Company»
«First_Name» «Last_Name» «TitlePosition»
«Address_1_»
«City_», «State» «Postal_Code»

Subject: Notification of the Mohave Valley Conservation Area Backwater Project

Dear Mr./Ms. «Last_Name»:

California State Lands Commission (CSLC) staff is providing this letter to notify you of the proposed Mohave Valley Conservation Area Backwater Project (Project), for which we are preparing an Environmental Assessment and Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA/MND) jointly with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). A new California law known as "Assembly Bill (AB) 52" (Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) effective on July 1, 2015, makes changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regarding tribal cultural resources and consultation with California Native American Tribes who have previously requested to be notified of projects in the geographic area traditionally and culturally affiliated with that tribe. While we have no written requests from any tribes for the area associated with this Project, we wish to engage with tribes proactively to ensure you have the opportunity to provide meaningful input on the Project's potential effects. You will also receive a separate notice when the EA/MND is released for a 30-day public review and comment period.

Information collected and investigations conducted for the EA/MND analysis indicate there are no known tribal cultural resources in the area that would be affected by the Project. Reclamation conducted a pedestrian surface survey in 2011 that did not identify archaeological sites in the Project area. Reclamation also sent notification of the proposed Project pursuant to federal consultation provisions on or around May 20, 2015. In addition, a Sacred Lands File search conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) did not identify Native American traditional cultural places or properties in the Project area, although it noted that the project site may be considered "culturally sensitive" by local tribes.

Please review the proposed Project components, described below. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss the Project, please contact Jennifer DeLeon at tribal.liaison@slc.ca.gov, or at (916) 574-0748. CSLC staff also encourages you to visit

the NAHC's AB 52 resource page at <http://nahc.ca.gov/codes/>, where you can find a sample letter requesting notification of future CEQA projects, along with other information.

The proposed Project consists of activities on an approximately 149-acre portion of a vacant parcel along the Colorado River (River) between River Miles 237 and 236, and is composed largely of sediment spoils from past dredging activities by Reclamation on the River. It is located on the historic floodplain of the River within the Moabi Regional Park (Park), about 13 miles south of Needles, California, in San Bernardino County (see Enclosure 1). The proposed Project site is currently being used as an Off-Highway Vehicle recreation area.

The CSLC is considering issuance of a lease to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), as the State partner for implementing the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP). It is anticipated that the lease will be considered by the CSLC at a formal public hearing in Sacramento on December 18, 2015. The Lower Colorado River MSCP balances the use of the River water resources with the conservation of native species and their habitats. Reclamation would create the Project as the federal partner implementing the Lower Colorado River MSCP.

The proposed Project would reconnect the River by excavating soil to create 50 acres of backwater channel and associated backwater habitat to contribute to the habitat restoration requirements identified in the Lower Colorado River MSCP. All excavated material would remain onsite, along the northeastern portion of the Project area (see Enclosure 2). The Project would provide habitat for flannelmouth sucker (*Castrotomus latipinnis*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), and bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*), and would also benefit numerous migratory bird species. The proposed Project would be carried out in the following four phases:

- **Phase 1 – Vegetation Clearing:** Reclamation would manually (using hand tools) and mechanically (using machinery) remove and break down vegetation debris into manageable pieces that would be buried onsite (see Enclosure 2).
- **Phase 2 – Excavation and Construction:** Reclamation would excavate the backwater channel and construct water control structures and a gravel boat ramp before allowing water into the proposed Project site. The 1.2 million cubic yards of dry excavated compacted fill would be used to bury the broken down vegetation debris (from Phase 1) onsite (see Enclosure 2).
- **Phase 3 – Establishment/Re-Vegetation:** Reclamation would till the soil along the contours of the backwater channel, and plant native vegetation as recommended in the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Lower Colorado River MSCP.
- **Phase 4 – Habitat Management, Operations, and Maintenance:** Reclamation would draft and implement a Mohave Valley Backwater Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan to address habitat/vegetation management, operation and

maintenance of the constructed facilities, and anticipated maintenance dredging to keep the backwater channel at a depth of 10 feet.

Again, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my tribal liaison at your convenience. You may also contact the Project staff lead, Afifa Awan, by phone at (916) 574-1891 or via email at Afifa.Awan@slc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER LUCCHESI
Executive Officer

Enclosures:

1. Project Location
2. Project Site Plan

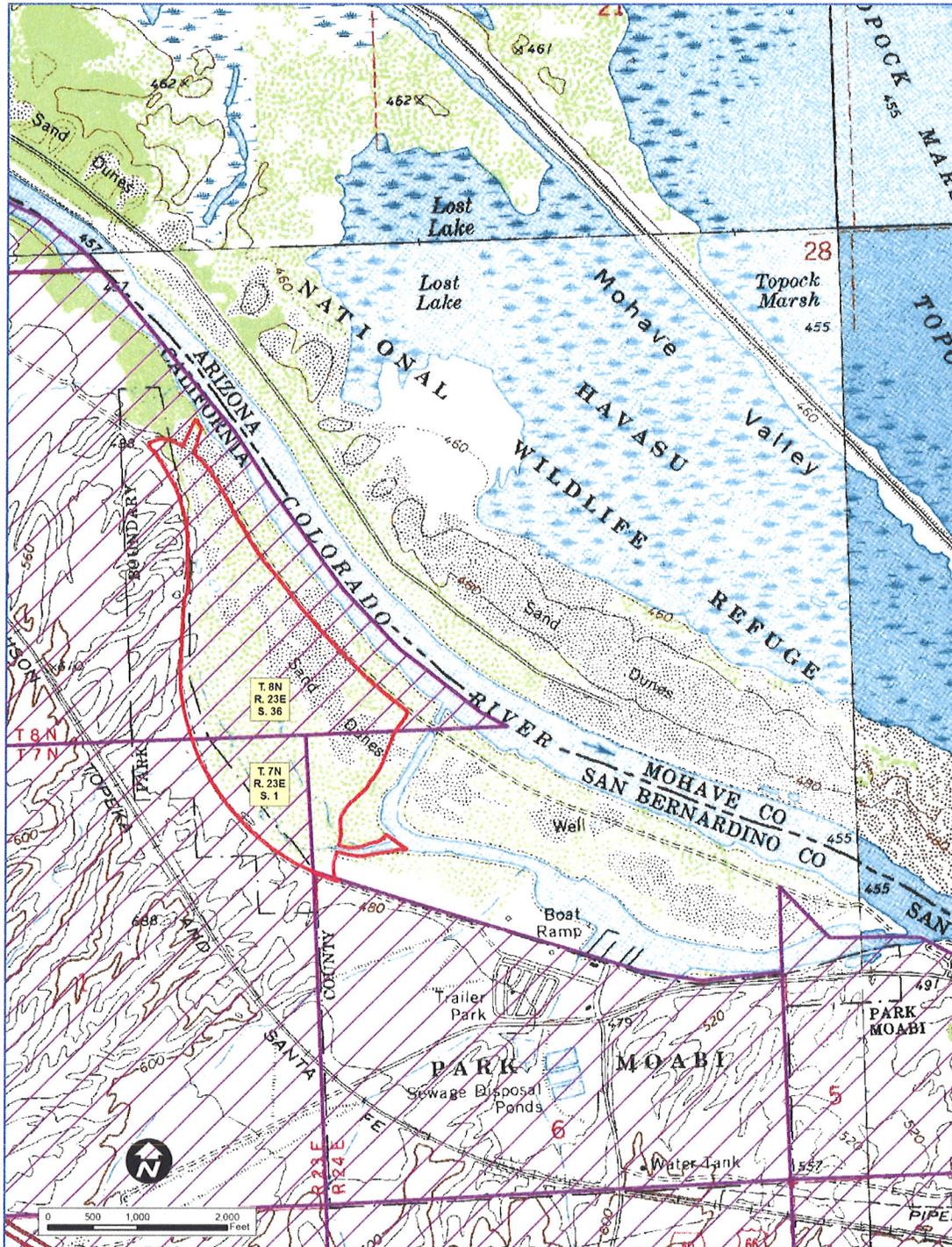
cc:

A. Awan
J. DeLeon
P. Griggs
P. Huber

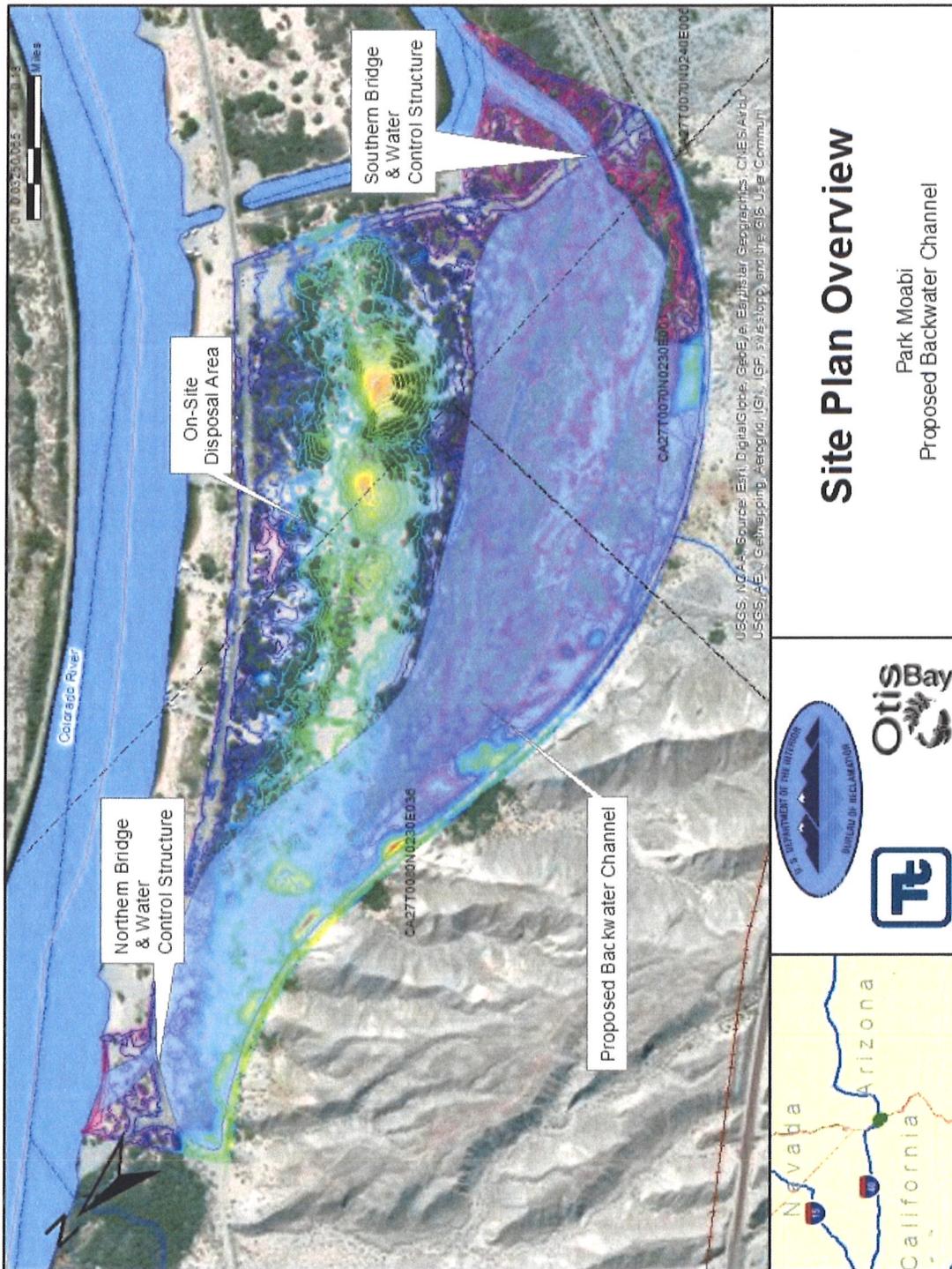
Identical Letters Sent To:

Ahamakav Cultural Society, Fort Mohave Indian Tribe
Ah-Mut_Pipa Foundation
Benitez (Mike), J.
California Native American Heritage Commission
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
Cocopah Indian Tribe
Colorado River Indian Tribes
Fort Mohave Indian Tribe
Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe
Hopi Tribe of Arizona
Hualapai Tribe
Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
MOAPA Band of Paiutes
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Pathrump Paiute Tribe
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

Enclosure 1: Project Location



Enclosure 2: Project Site Plan



Site Plan Overview

Park Moabi
Proposed Backwater Channel

