

1 **3.1 AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES**

AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES – Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 **3.1.1 Environmental Setting**

3 The Project site is located directly adjacent to the Colorado River (River) about 13 miles
 4 south of Needles, California. The site is already disturbed, consisting of sediment spoils
 5 from dredging and bankline/levee maintenance conducted by Reclamation. There are
 6 sand dunes and dense invasive species vegetation such as saltcedar. Currently, it is
 7 being used for Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) recreation. The Project site can be seen
 8 from levee roads, riverfront campsites, River from the east, Interstate 40 (I-40),
 9 Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway from the west, and County
 10 recreational developments (Pirate’s Cove Restaurant & Bar, 7-lane launch ramp,
 11 marina, RV and tent camping, waterfront cabins, and convenient store) from the south.

12 **3.1.2 Regulatory Setting**

13 The following Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to this issue area and
 14 relevant to the Project are identified in Table 3.1-1.

15 **Table 3.1-1. Laws, Regulations, and Policies (Aesthetics/Visual Resources)**

CA	California Scenic Highway Program	The California Scenic Highway Program, managed by the California Department of Transportation, was created to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. State highways identified as scenic, or eligible for designation, are listed in California Streets and Highways Code section 260 et seq.
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16 The following local goals and policies related to aesthetics are from the San Bernardino
 17 County 2007 General Plan (SBC 2007):

- 18 • Chapter VI. Open Space Element – Section B.
- 19 ○ **Goal OS 5.** To maintain and enhance the visual character of scenic
- 20 routes in the County by enhancing habitat for native fish and wildlife.

1 The Project area is not officially designated as a scenic vista under the San Bernardino
2 County General Plan Policy OS 5.1 according to the following criteria (SBC 2012):

- 3 • A roadway, vista point, or area that provides a vista of undisturbed natural areas;
- 4 • Includes a unique or unusual feature that compromises an important or dominant
5 portion of the viewshed (the area within the field of view of the observer); and
- 6 • Offers a distant vista that provides relief from less attractive views of nearby
7 features (such as views of mountain backdrops from urban areas).

8 The I-40 to the west of the Project area is not designated as a State Scenic Highway.
9 The Historic Route 66 (National Trails Highway or Main Street) to the south of the
10 Pirate's Cove Restaurant & Bar is also not designated as a scenic highway in the
11 vicinity of the Project area (Ref. Page VI-15 Open Space Element).

12 3.1.3 Impact Analysis (CEQA)

13 a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

14 **Less than Significant Impact.** As described in the Regulatory Setting
15 discussion above, there are no officially designated scenic vistas within or
16 adjacent to the Project site. During Project activities, there would be short-term,
17 temporary impacts to views of the Project site from the levee roads, riverfront
18 campsites, the River from the east, I-40 and BNSF Railway from the west, and
19 the County recreational development from the south. The proposed Project-
20 related activities would include vegetation clearing, grading, and excavation to
21 construct a new open water channel and new water control structures. After
22 Project completion, views from publicly accessible viewpoints of the Project site
23 would be enhanced by creating an open backwater channel that would be re-
24 vegetated with a variety of native plants.

25 b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, 26 rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

27 **No Impact.** As explained in the Regulatory Setting discussion, above, no
28 officially designated Federal, State, or local scenic highway corridors are located
29 in, or are visible from, the Project site. In addition, no such resources were
30 identified within the Project area based on the Phase I Cultural Resources
31 Investigation (Appendix H) prepared for the Moabi Regional Park OHV area in
32 2011. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on scenic resources
33 including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within
34 a State scenic highway corridor.

35 c) *Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and 36 its surroundings?*

37 **No Impact.** As noted in the responses to items **a)** and **b)** above, the Project
38 would not substantially degrade the Project site's existing visual quality. The

1 visual character is expected to be improved by creating an open backwater
2 channel that would be re-vegetated with a variety of native plants.

3 **d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely**
4 **affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

5 **No Impact.** The Project would not include the construction or installation of any
6 lighting or illuminating sources. The proposed Project activities would take place
7 during daylight hours. Therefore, there would be no new impact resulting from
8 visual glare or light.

9 **3.1.4 Environmental Consequences (NEPA)**

10 **No Action Alternative**

11 The No Action Alternative would have no effect to Aesthetics/Visual Resources. The
12 Aesthetics/Visual Resources would not be altered and viewshed would remain in its
13 current condition, dominated by dense vegetation; primarily saltcedar.

14 **Proposed Action (Project)**

15 Short-term impacts would result from the implementation of Phases 1 through Phase 3
16 described in Section 2.4 such as vegetation removal activities, construction operations,
17 restoration activities, and maintenance activities. These activities would temporarily
18 lessen the visual quality of the area on or near visually sensitive resources because of
19 the use of land based mechanical and hydraulic equipment.

20 However, re-vegetation would occur around the excavated channel. The new open
21 water channel and new water control structures would be designed to blend into the
22 existing natural landscape and would not impair or obstruct the views from the River or
23 I-40. The re-vegetation and creation of habitat would restore the Project area to a
24 natural appearance that would enhance the visual aesthetics, as well as add value to
25 the area and the viewshed (Appendix B).

26 **Cumulative Impacts**

27 No cumulative impacts are anticipated for Aesthetics/Visual Resources.

28 **3.1.5 Mitigation Summary (CEQA Only)**

29 The Project would not result in significant impacts to Aesthetics/Visual Resources.
30 Therefore, no mitigation is required.