

FACILITY PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

LEVEL II INFILL CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES PROJECT AT THE MULE CREEK STATE PRISON INFILL SITE - SECONDARY EFFLUENT SPRAY FIELD ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

GENERAL INFORMATION

To: Office of Planning and Research, Responsible Agencies, and Trustee Agencies

Project Title: Level II Infill Correctional Facilities Project at the Mule Creek State Prison Infill Site - Effluent Spray Field Enhancement Measures

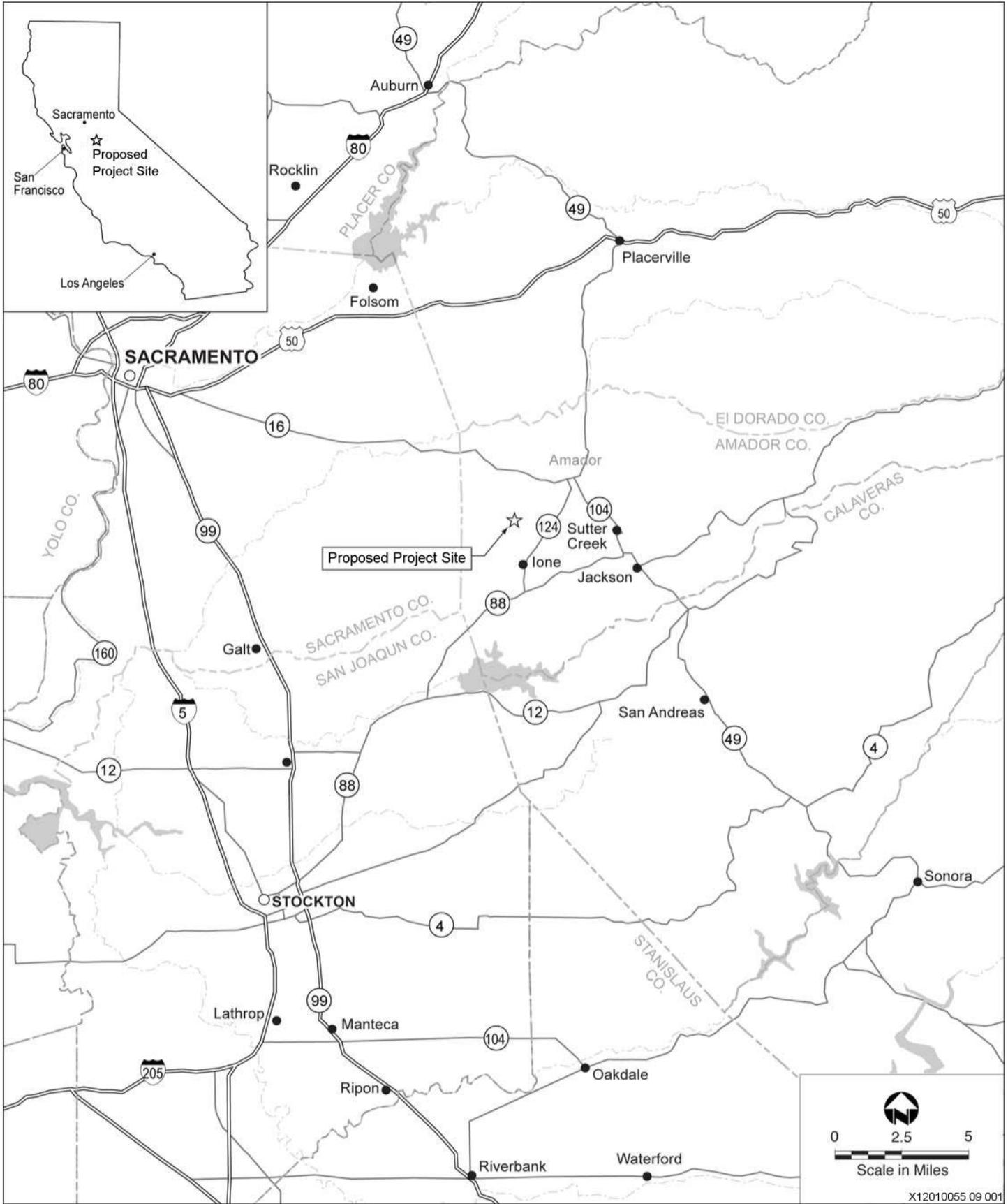
Lead Agency: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)
Facility Planning, Construction and Management
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827
Contact: Robert Sleppy (916) 255-1141

Purpose of Notice: In accordance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), CDCR is distributing a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to solicit comments on the scope of a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for installation and operation of up to approximately 60 to 70 acres of new secondary effluent spray fields as well as enhancements to the existing spray fields within existing CDCR property at Mule Creek State Prison (MCSP). This NOP is intended to satisfy the requirements of CEQA, (Public Resources Code, Division 13, Section 21000–21177), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000–15387).

Project Location: The project site is located within the eastern/southeastern portion of existing state prison property at 4001 State Route 104, Lone, CA 95640 (see Exhibits 1 and 2).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

MCSP is served by an existing secondary wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that operates under Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) described in the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (CVRWQCB's) Order No. 5-00-088 (April 2000). The WWTP treats the combined wastewater flows from MCSP, the Preston Youth Correctional Facility (PYCF), and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Academy. The PYCF was closed in June 2011, and CDCR has no current plans for reuse or alternative use of the facility. However, the facility still generates minimal sewage flows, as well as wet-weather flows, that are treated at the MCSP treatment plant. Sewage generated by the new Level II dormitories will be conveyed to the prison's WWTP for treatment in the same manner as the treatment of sewage from the other three sources.



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Exhibit 1

Project Vicinity Map



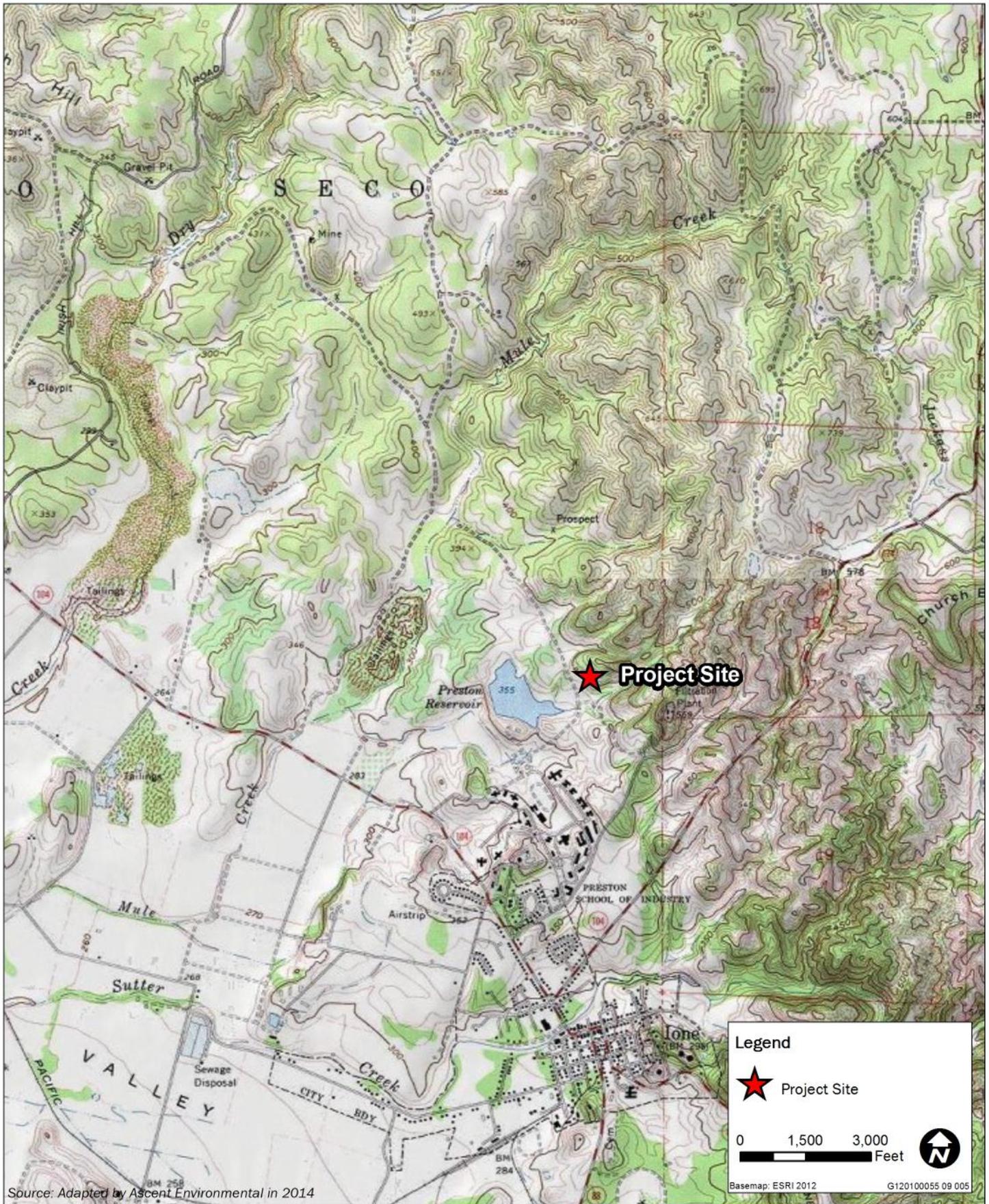


Exhibit 2

Topographic Map of Project Location



The WWTP is currently designed for an average dry-weather flow of 740,000 gallons per day (or 0.74 million gallons per day [mgd]) and peak wet-weather flow of 2.2 mgd. The plant's design consists of an oxidation ditch, two clarifiers, chlorination facilities (for disinfection), a belt filter press operation for dewatering sludge, and a 4,000-gallon hypochlorination storage tank. Solids produced by the WWTP are dewatered with a belt filter press and then stored in a covered, concrete-lined drying area. When the material is sufficiently dried it is collected by a licensed compost contractor and hauled to Kern County to be converted into Class A compost. The plant's facilities include a large, on-site reservoir (approximately 475 acre foot capacity) for storage of treated secondary effluent; this reservoir is situated on prison grounds immediately north of the WWTP.

Disinfected secondary effluent from the WWTP is currently disposed of by either discharge to on-prison grounds spray irrigation fields or by conveyance to the City of Lone's tertiary treatment plant. Prior to the start of construction of the Level II infill facility and other infrastructure improvements there were 296 acres of spray fields available within the state prison property that were permitted for the disposal of disinfected secondary effluent. The spray fields consist of grassland/oak woodland where effluent can be irrigated within specific designated areas on a rotational basis to assure uniform application and prevent overwatering.

CDCR plans to continue the practice of disinfection of all treated secondary effluent prior to its application to on-site prison spray fields and for the portion conveyed to Preston Reservoir.

The previously certified environmental impact report entitled, Level II Correctional Facilities Project, Site-Specific Evaluation of Level II Infill Correction Facilities at Mule Creek State Prison, (SCH# 2012122038) ("Infill EIR" for the "MCSP Project") stated that construction of the new facilities would result in an approximately 100-acre reduction to the existing secondary effluent spray fields at the prison. The Infill EIR proposed the use of an existing 100+ acre agricultural field located roughly two miles southwest of the infill site on Greenrock Ranch. (See Infill EIR, pp.2-11 to 2-12, [Exhibit 2-5], 3.2-1, 3.7-16 to 3.7-17). Subsequent detailed engineering has determined that only 60-70 acres of new spray fields are needed to meet the permitted capacity of the WWTP. The SEIR will consider the potential direct and indirect effects of the revised proposed spray fields and enhancements to existing spray fields from those previously considered in the Infill EIR prior to adoption of the MCSP Project.

The Preston Reservoir provides interim storage for the portion of the treated secondary effluent intended for additional treatment at the tertiary plant. Processed effluent from the tertiary plant is used to irrigate the Castle Oaks Golf Course. CDCR operates this reservoir under a three-party agreement that includes the City of Lone and the Amador Regional Sanitation Authority. The terms of this agreement do not extend to the operation of secondary effluent spray fields on prison grounds.

CDCR is undertaking upgrades to the WWTP beginning in 2015 that will consist of a number of mechanical improvements (e.g., secondary clarifier, chlorine contact basin, new pumps and controls, etc.) to enhance the operation of the plant and improve water conservation. While CDCR anticipates the completed WWTP will represent a significant improvement to the overall operations, CDCR is not planning to seek an increase in the permitted treatment capacity of the facility. CDCR expects the permitted capacity, once the facility is permitted by the CVRWQCB, to remain at 0.74 mgd daily flows and 2.2 mgd peak flows.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the proposed measures is to assure the WWTP at the prison would meet its permitted capacity of 0.74 mgd through enhancement of the existing effluent spray field system. These measures include (1) install up to approximately 60 to 70 acres of new secondary effluent spray fields, and (2) enhance the effectiveness of the remaining portion of the prison's spray fields by undertaking improvements to existing sprinkler and return-water systems. The proposed enhancement measures are intended to achieve the following objectives:

- ▲ Improve the overall effectiveness of the secondary effluent irrigation system to ensure wastewater from all entities served by the prison's WWTP meets all applicable water standards and quality regulations;
- ▲ Provide sufficient disposal capacity for that portion of secondary effluent that must be irrigated to land within the state-owned prison grounds in normal and multiple wet/dry year conditions to meet MCSP's needs at full occupancy of all its facilities along with flows originating from the fire academy and juvenile facility; and
- ▲ Utilize vacant/underutilized property within state-owned property associated with MCSP for the cost efficient disposal of treated secondary effluent.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

Construction of the Level II dormitories and a new electrical substation on the grounds of MCSP has resulted in the displacement of areas previously used for the irrigation of disinfected secondary effluent within the prison grounds. To account for the combined loss of previous disposal areas and to assure the WWTP at MCSP can operate at a level necessary to serve the population of the existing prison and the anticipated additional inmates that will be housed in the Level II dormitories currently under construction, CDCR estimates that up to approximately 60 to 70 acres of new effluent spray fields are necessary. The candidate spray fields will be assessed in light of variations in terrain, soils, depth to groundwater, environmental constraints and other factors to identify those areas that are appropriate for secondary effluent irrigation.

The areas to be evaluated for new spray fields are generally bounded by the new Level II dormitories, Preston Reservoir, the fire academy, and PYCF; one additional extension of an existing spray field (Field 4) to northeast of the Level II dormitories is also under consideration, see Exhibit 3. The remaining effluent spray fields that may be enhanced are shown in Exhibit 4. In comparison, the Infill EIR evaluated an existing agricultural field situated approximately two miles southwest of the infill site for the potential use as a new replacement effluent spray field. While the City of Lone has expressed concerns for the long-term availability of this site CDCR will continue to consider this field as an alternative to the proposed enhancement of spray fields within prison grounds.

The majority of the areas under consideration for use as secondary effluent spray fields have served as wildland fire training areas for the adjacent CAL FIRE academy. Previous activities in these areas include, but are not limited to, cutting fire lines (by hand and with heavy equipment), development of training roads, setting demonstration fires, and creating realistic fire response/rescue situations,

CDCR will also evaluate and potentially modify portions of the remaining secondary effluent spray fields to enhance their respective operational performance and regulatory compliance by improving irrigation uniformity/coverage, capturing and re-using irrigation runoff, reducing the practice of periodically till each field, and introducing grass species adapted to effluent spray fields.

The proposed enhancement measures would require the installation of new piping, pumps, irrigation equipment, and related infrastructure to serve the new spray fields. New piping for these fields would connect to existing spray field distribution network; the main distribution piping would typically be placed within existing unpaved roadways (approximately 3' to 5' below grade). Within the proposed spray fields the distribution piping would connect to smaller piping placed either on top of the ground or buried to provide a fixed-set irrigation system that would be used for distribution of the disinfected secondary effluent. Spray heads would consist of rotating sprinklers in a pattern that would maximize uniform distribution of the secondary effluent to each field. CDCR anticipates that installation of the irrigation piping and associated infrastructure would involve limited native tree (e.g., oaks, grey pines, etc.) removal. Enhancement of existing spray fields may include, but is not limited to, installation of new sprinklers, automation of irrigation valves, improvements to run-off control features, etc.

Installation of the new spray fields would involve limited initial soil disturbance; long-term disturbance is expected to be minimal. All trenching for installation of the irrigation network would be monitored for cultural resources by qualified professionals and/or sacred lands observers. Pre-construction assessment of cultural and biological resources is intended to minimize disturbance of significant resources, including existing recorded cultural resource sites.

The new fields would not be located in areas determined to meet the regulatory standards for wetlands. Pathways for new irrigation piping required to serve the new spray fields will also avoid disturbance of protected wetland habitat and jurisdictional waters of the United States. No mass-grading of the existing terrain is planned for installation of new spray fields.

Enhancement of the existing effluent spray fields would be limited to sprinkler modification/replacement, modification of run-off control features, planting new cover crops, and upgrading sprinkler control systems. Only minor ground-disturbing activities are anticipated for implementation of the enhancement aspects of the proposed enhancement measures.

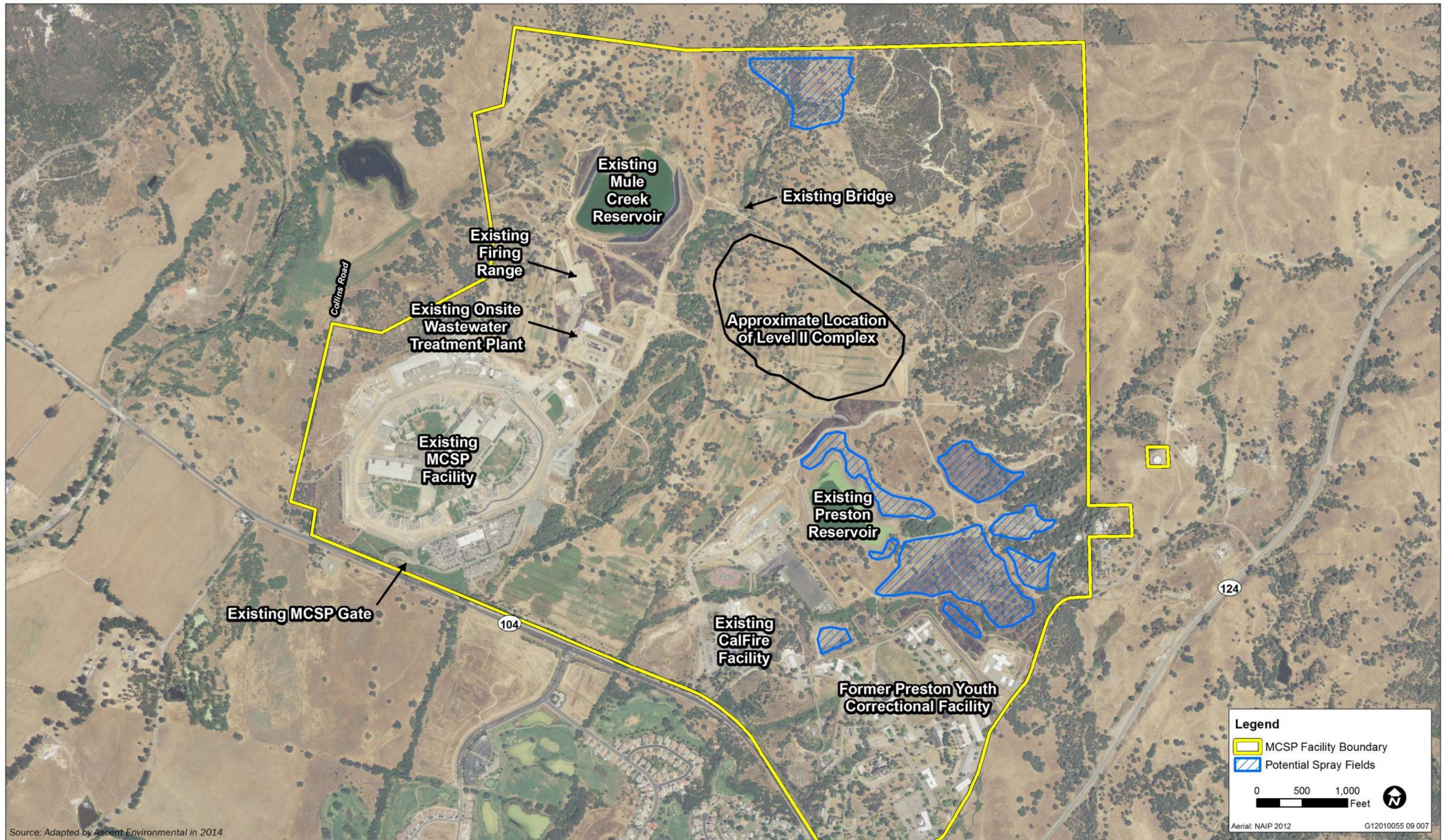
As with the existing fields, effluent disposal activities within the proposed new spray fields would generally occur weekly between the months of March and October depending on soil moisture conditions of each field. Under the current WDR secondary effluent may also be irrigated during other months but only during periods between (approximately 48 hours) significant rainfall events. Irrigation cycles would be monitored to assure runoff does not exceed the boundaries of each respective spray field in accordance with CVRWQCB requirements. The new spray fields would be maintained by MCSP's existing WWTP facility staff and mowed periodically to prevent vegetation from hindering the effectiveness of the sprinklers spraying of effluent. Mowing activities would involve the use of a tractor with an agricultural-type mower. Use of an agricultural-type mower would result in minimal ground disturbance.

Installation of the piping and other infrastructure needed for the new effluent spray fields is planned for the fall of 2015 with initial operation of the spray fields proposed in the spring of 2016. As noted, a revised WDR approved by the CVRWQB would be required for the operation of the new spray fields. Enhancement of the existing effluent spray fields would also occur during this period.

POTENTIAL APPROVALS AND PERMITS REQUIRED

The following is a list of potential approvals and/or permits that may be required as part of implementation of the proposed enhancement measures:

- ▲ CDCR: Approval of proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures, adoption of environmental findings and mitigation measures, and, if necessary, adoption of Statement of Overriding Consideration.
- ▲ US Army Corps of Engineers: Confirmation of jurisdictional wetland boundaries.
- ▲ US Fish and Wildlife Service: Issuance of take permits if species protected under the Endangered Species Act are likely to be affected by installation and/or operation of the proposed enhancement measures.
- ▲ California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Issuance of any necessary take permits for species protected under the California Endangered Species Act or any necessary Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements under Department of Fish and Game Code Section 1600-1616.
- ▲ CVRWQCB: Secure general construction permits and amendments to existing waste discharge requirements for the MCSP WWTP and new spray fields.
- ▲ Air Quality Management District: Secure, if necessary, applicable air quality permits from the local district.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2014

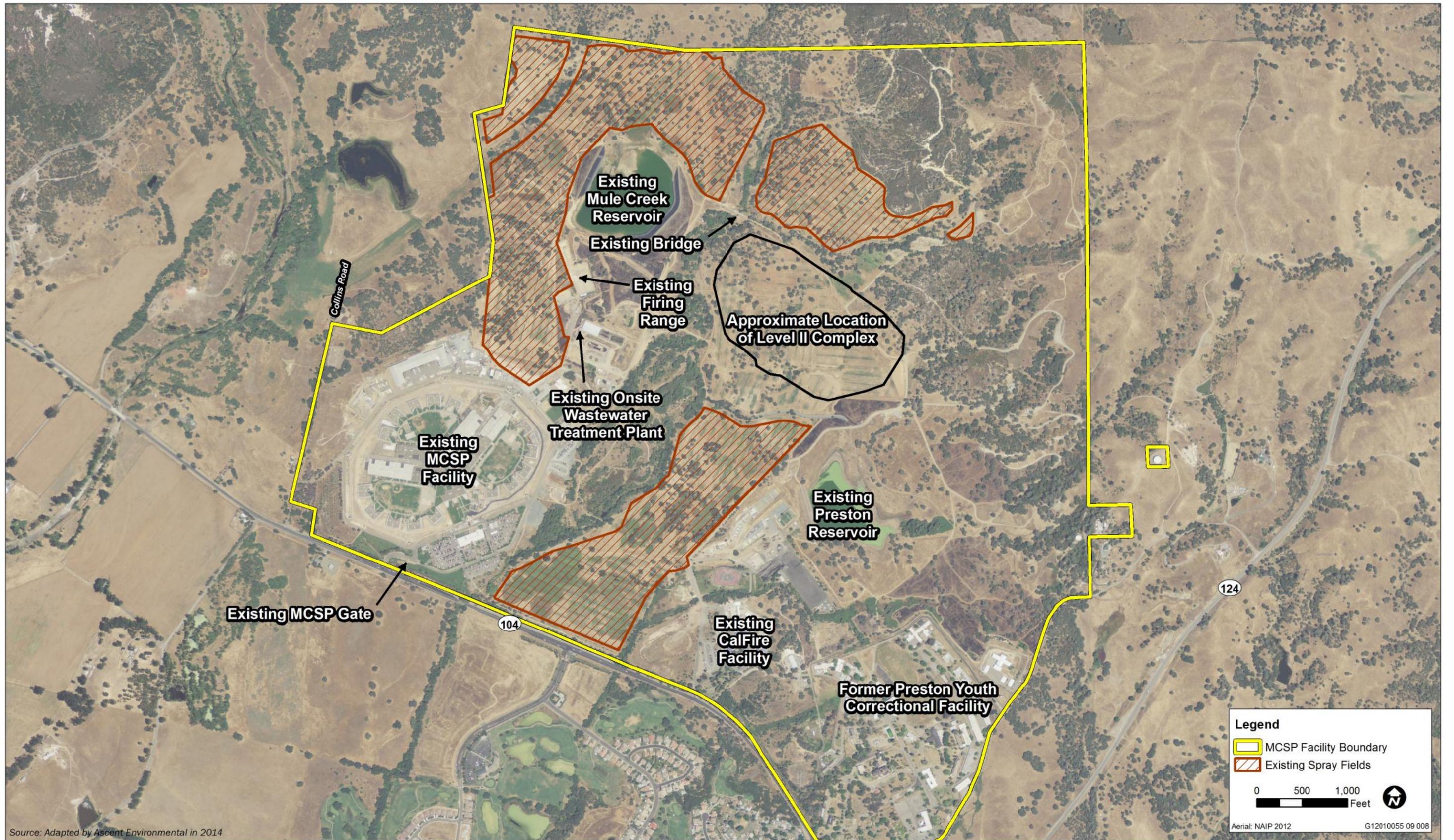


Exhibit 4

Existing Spray Fields



POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CDCR has concluded that the proposed enhance measures may have the potential to result in significant impacts to three resource areas: biological resources, cultural resources/sacred lands, and hydrology/water quality.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines section 15162, no subsequent or supplemental EIR is required to a previously certified EIR unless one of the events listed in section 15162, subdivision (a), occurs. In this circumstance, because CDCR has concluded that the proposed spray field enhancement measures may have the potential to result in new significant adverse effects not analyzed in the Infill EIR, a SEIR has been found to be required. The Infill EIR already has comprehensively analyzed all potential impacts relating to the use of approximately 100 acres of agricultural land situated off-site of the prison grounds to replace the irrigation areas lost in Spray Fields 4 and 5 (the construction area for the Level II dormitories). CDCR has decided to prepare a SEIR to analyze the proposed changes to the location of the new spray fields as analyzed in the Infill EIR.

The SEIR will analyze the potential environmental impacts that may result from the incremental changes to the MCSP Project, but were not covered by the previously certified Infill EIR. These issues are: biological resources, cultural resources, and hydrology/water quality. The SEIR will evaluate the potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with construction and implementation of the proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures, as described above. Mitigation measures will be recommended, where appropriate, to avoid or substantially reduce significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The SEIR will include a review of existing biological resource studies and regulations related to biological resources that occur within the project area. The findings of field studies will also be incorporated into the environmental analysis. The document will evaluate potential impacts on sensitive biological resources resulting from installation and operation of new spray fields at MCSP, including potential impacts on wildlife species from installation of piping and mowing activities.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The SEIR will evaluate the potential for impacts to cultural resources, prehistoric and historic, to occur as a result of implementation of the effluent spray field enhancement measures. Background research will include record searches at the appropriate California Historical Resources Information System Information Center, as well as searches of the Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands database, contact with appropriate Native American representatives, and pedestrian surveys will be conducted of the proposed spray field areas and corridors where piping may be installed. CDCR anticipates that consultation with representatives of the Lone Band of Miwok Indians as well as other local tribal representatives will occur during the preparation of the cultural resource assessment.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The SEIR will evaluate the potential impact of the effluent spray field enhancement measures on the hydrology and water quality characteristics of the project area the potential for degraded water quality. The SEIR will identify the requirements for preventing soil erosion during installation and during the operation of the potential enhancement components.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

CDCR has conducted preliminary review of the proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures and has determined it is not likely to result in significant environmental effects to the following resources, and/or would not substantially increase an impact already addressed in the certified Infill EIR:

- ▲ Aesthetics: Installation and use of the new spray fields, as well as enhancements to existing fields would result in only minor alterations to the existing appearance of the prison grounds. The new fields would generally not be visible from any public viewpoint such as State Route 104 or Waterman Road.
- ▲ Agriculture and Forestry Resources: The proposed enhancement measures would not result in the loss of agricultural or forestry resources. Substantial vegetation removal would not occur as a result of construction or operation of the proposed spray field enhancement measures.
- ▲ Air Quality: Construction activities associated with the new spray fields and enhancement of the existing fields would be relatively minor and would not result in substantial generation of criteria pollutant emissions. Moreover, construction of spray fields was already addressed in the certified Infill EIR, and the SEIR will simply addresses changes in the location of the spray fields. No new criteria pollutants would be generated during operation of the proposed project.
- ▲ Geology/Soils/Mineral Resources: The proposed enhancement measures would not increase the risk of exposure of people and/or structures to geologic hazards nor would it involve the use of septic systems. Because the proposed project would not involve substantial construction, excavation, or other ground disturbance, potential loss of mineral resources is not anticipated.
- ▲ Greenhouse Gases: The proposed enhancement measures would be relatively minor and would not result in substantial generation of greenhouse gases. Moreover, construction of spray fields was already addressed in the certified Infill EIR, and the SEIR simply addresses changes in the location of the spray fields. No notable greenhouse gases would be generated by operation of the spray fields.
- ▲ Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The proposed new spray fields would not increase the risk of exposure to hazardous materials or increase hazards at the project site. All effluent disposal operations would be conducted in accordance with applicable California Code of Regulations and waste discharge requirements. The proposed enhancements to the existing fields would further insure compliance with water quality regulations. Setbacks from all roadways and other areas typically occupied by staff and visitors would be provided around the perimeter of each new spray field in conformance with state environmental health regulations.
- ▲ Land Use and Planning: The proposed new spray fields and other improvements would not conflict with existing planning efforts or physically divide an established community because improvements would occur within the existing prison/CAL FIRE training grounds.
- ▲ Noise: The nearest sensitive receptors (dormitories at CALFIRE) to the proposed new spray fields are located approximately 1,000 feet from proposed construction activities, and based on the limited construction activities proposed (e.g. one backhoe/excavator), no substantial construction-related noise impacts would be anticipated. Maintenance activities would be of a similar scale and frequency to activities already conducted within the project area, and no increase in operational noise is anticipated.
- ▲ Population/Housing/Employment: Existing maintenance staff at MCSP would be responsible for operation of the new spray fields. No increases in local population and employment or increased demand for housing would occur as a consequence of the proposed enhancement measures.

- ▲ Public Services and Recreation: Because the proposed enhancement measures would not increase local on-site population or result in additional on-site structures, no increases in the demand for public services or recreational opportunities would be anticipated.
- ▲ Transportation/Traffic: The proposed enhancement measures would be operated by existing, on-site staff at MCSP and would not result in additional vehicle trips to and from the prison grounds. No impacts to the local or regional transportation network would occur as a consequence of the proposed enhancement measures.
- ▲ Utilities/Service Systems: The proposed enhancement measures would provide additional secondary effluent disposal capacity at MCSP and would not result in increased demand for utilities as a result of their construction or operation.

Because none of these resources are expected to be substantially affected by the proposed enhancement measures, CDCR does not propose addressing them in the SEIR.

ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE SEIR

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the SEIR will describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed enhancement measures that are capable of meeting most of the proposed enhancement measure objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed enhancement measures. The SEIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Interested individuals, groups, and agencies may provide CDCR with written comments on topics to be addressed in the SEIR. In accordance with time limits mandated by State law (e.g. minimum 30-day public review of a NOP), comments should be provided no later than **5:00 p.m. on February 20, 2015**. Agencies that will need to use the SEIR when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed enhancement measures should provide CDCR with the name of a staff contact person. Please send all comments to:

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Office of Facility Planning, Construction and Management
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827

Email: Robert.Sleppy@cdcr.ca.gov
Contact: Robert Sleppy at (916) 255-1141

Copies of current and future environmental documents related to the MCSP Project and proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures will be available for review at the following location during the public review periods.

Lone Branch Library
25 East Main Street
Lone, CA 95640
(209) 274-2560

Jackson Branch Library
530 Sutter Street
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 223-6400

CDCR will also be conducting a public scoping meeting during public review of the NOP in the City of Lone area. The objective of the meeting is to brief interested parties on the proposed effluent spray field enhancement measures and obtain the views of agency representatives and the public on the scope and content of the SEIR and the potentially significant environmental impacts. The following identifies the times and locations for the NOP scoping meeting:

February 5, 2015, 6:00 p.m.
Evalynn Bishop Hall
Howard Park
600 South Church Street
Lone, CA 95640