



WHC WILDLIFE
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CALIFORNIA LOST FISHING GEAR RECOVERY PROJECT

Draft Initial Study and
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

The following Initial Study has been prepared in compliance with CEQA.

**Office of Resource Management and Planning
University of California
1 Shields Avenue
Davis, California 95616**

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Project title:

California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project

Project location:

The proposed Project is located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to a maximum water depth of 400 feet.

Lead agency's name and address:

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University of California, Davis
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616-8678

Contact person:

Sid England 530-752-5432

Project sponsor's name and address:

See lead agency.

Location of administrative record:

See lead agency.

Availability of environmental analysis:

The Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Draft Initial Study are available for review at the following website: <http://www.ormp.ucdavis.edu/environreview/>. Additionally, paper copies of the report are available by contacting Matt Dulcich at medulcich@ucdavis.edu or (530) 752-9597.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INITIAL STUDY

Pursuant to Section 15063 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 et seq.), this Initial Study contains the environmental analysis to be used by the University of California, a CEQA lead agency for determining whether an Environmental Impact Report, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or a Negative Declaration is required for the proposed Project. The CEQA Guidelines require that an Initial Study contain a Project description, description of environmental setting, identification of environmental effects by checklist or other similar form, explanation of environmental effects, discussion of mitigation for significant environmental effects, evaluation of the Project's consistency with existing, applicable land use controls, and the name of persons who prepared the study.

1.1 INITIAL STUDY PROCESS

The purpose of this Initial Study is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project to determine what level of additional environmental review, if any, is appropriate. As shown in the Determination in Section 6 of this document, and based on the analysis contained in this Initial Study, it has been determined that the proposed Project would not result in a significant impact to the environment that can not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The analysis contained in this Initial Study concludes that the proposed Project would result in the following categories of impacts, depending on the environmental issue involved: no impact; less-than-significant impact; or less-than-significant impact with project-specific mitigation measures. The Project would result in one potentially significant impact, but a project-specific mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration is appropriate (the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is presented in Section 9).

1.2 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW

This Initial Study will be circulated for public and agency review from July 3, 2008 to August 1, 2008. Copies of this document are available online at <http://www.ormp.ucdavis.edu/environreview/> or can be requested by contacting Matt Dulcich, medulcich@ucdavis.edu or (530) 752-9597. Comments on this Draft Initial Study must be received by 5:00 PM on August 1, 2008 and can be e-mailed to environreview@ucdavis.edu or sent to:

Sid England
Office of Resource Management and Planning
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One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616

1.3 PROJECT APPROVALS

As a public agency principally responsible for approving or carrying out the proposed Project, the University of California is the Lead Agency under CEQA and is responsible for reviewing and certifying the adequacy of the environmental document and approving the proposed Project. Additional permits for the proposed research may be needed and, if appropriate, other public agencies may elect to utilize this document for purposes of complying with CEQA and NEPA. Potential approvals from other agencies are listed below. These potential approvals are listed but the unique activities of the proposed Project may result in certain agencies for which consultation takes place but not actual approvals are required.

Determination of permit needs will take place once the site specific fishing gear recovery efforts are determined and the affected agencies have been consulted.

Agency	Potential Approval
California Air Resources Board (applicable regional air districts)	Vessel engine permit and operational restrictions for air quality.
California Coastal Commission	Fishing gear recovery operations
California Department of Fish and Game	Fishing gear recovery operations
National Marine Sanctuaries	Fishing gear recovery operations
State Water Resources Control Board (applicable regional boards)	Water quality at recovery sites
State Lands Commission	Fishing gear recovery operations
State Parks and Recreation	Fishing gear recovery operations
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Fishing gear recovery operations
United States Coast Guard	Vessel operations
US Navy	Vessel operations near San Nicholas and San Clemente Islands

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE INITIAL STUDY

This Initial Study is organized into the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction: provides summary background information about the proposed Project, including Project location, lead agency, and contact information summarizes the scope of the Initial Study document, the Project’s review and approval processes, and the document's organization.

Section 2 – Project Description: includes a description of the proposed Project, including the need for the Project, the Project’s objectives, and the elements included in the Project.

Section 3 – Environmental Resources Potentially Affected: identifies which environmental resources, if any, involve at least one significant or potentially significant impact that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Section 4 – Determination: indicates whether impacts associated with the proposed Project are significant, and what, if any, additional environmental documentation is required.

Section 5 – Evaluation of Environmental Impacts: contains the Environmental Checklist form for each resource area. The checklist is used to assist in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project.

Section 6 – Fish and Game Determination: indicates if the Project has a potential to impact wildlife or habitat and if an associated Fish and Game filing fee would be paid.

Section 7 – References: lists references used in the preparation of this document.

Section 8 – Report Preparers: lists the names of individuals involved in the preparation of this document.

Section 9 – Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration: presents the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico including coastal bays such as San Francisco and San Diego and from the intertidal zone to a maximum water depth of 400 feet. State marine waters are utilized for commercial and recreational fishing, commercial shipping, recreational boating, military operations, scientific exploration, underwater/offshore engineering, weather/climate monitoring, and tourism.

The California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project was started as a pilot Project in July 2005 by the SeaDoc Society with funding from the California Ocean Protection Council and the State Coastal Conservancy, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the NOAA Community-based Marine Debris Removal and Prevention Program. The SeaDoc Society, at the University of California, Davis, Wildlife Health Center, works to ensure the health of marine wildlife and the ecosystems upon which they depend through science and education. The California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project is a no-fault program which encourages ocean users to report the presence of lost fishing gear, and which uses experienced and certified SCUBA divers to remove gear from near-shore waters in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner. In the pilot phase, the SeaDoc Society:

- Removed over 11 tons of discarded and abandoned fishing gear from around California's Channel Islands (Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Catalina Islands): 552 individual pieces, including 248 commercial lobster traps and trap remnants, 3 purse seine nets and a portion of a gill net;
- Documented impacts of lost gear on public-trust resources, (e.g. "ghostfishing" by lost lobster traps in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary months after the closure of the commercial season);
- Identified several hundred lost fishing gear targets through citizen reports and 47 days of diver surveys, sidescan sonar, and search and collection efforts (primarily in the five pilot phase study areas: Humboldt Co, Monterey Bay, San Luis Obispo Co, Channel Islands NMS, and Santa Catalina Island);
- Cleaned up approximately 198 sq. km. of seafloor habitat through gear removal, resulting in reduced hazards for boaters, less obstructed grounds for commercial fisheries, and less threat for living coastal resources;
- Recovered 770 pounds of discarded recreational fishing gear (monofilament, hooks, tackle, ropes) from public-access fishing piers from Santa Cruz to Ocean Beach (San Diego), and installed fishing line recycling bins on several of these piers to prevent further accumulation of lost gear;
- Conducted epidemiologic research on the impact of lost fishing gear entanglement and ingestion on California coastal marine wildlife;
- Developed and tested field methodologies, producing the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project Policies and Procedures Manual (March 2006);
- Acquired permits, tested and refined protocols, and hired qualified staff and contractors;

- Distributed outreach materials and gained media exposure; and
- Enjoyed broad support for the Project among state and federal resource agencies.

The SeaDoc Society's pilot California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project restored approximately 200 square kilometers of seafloor around the Channel Islands by finding and recovering over 11 tons of lost fishing gear. The pilot Project documented lost gear at densities of over 25 targets (lobster traps) per 100 meter by 100 meter section of seafloor off Anacapa Island alone. Extrapolating just a fraction of these high-density figures to the approximately 1,100 square kilometers of nearshore, shallow coastal waters of California (out to 1 km from shore) – there are likely thousands of pieces of lost fishing gear posing a hazard to wildlife and people and reducing seafloor habitat quality in California.

Research suggests that on average almost 10 percent of all brown pelicans and gulls admitted to wildlife rehabilitation centers in California are injured by entanglement in, or ingestion of, monofilament line and other forms of lost fishing gear. California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals and northern elephant seals are also consistently injured by lost fishing gear. Hundreds of pounds of discarded recreational fishing gear have been removed from water around just 12 public access fishing piers. There are many more piers that are heavily used for recreational fishing in California, and the waters surrounding these piers are expected to contain similar amounts of lost gear.

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico including coastal bays such as San Francisco and San Diego and from the intertidal zone to a maximum water depth of 400 feet. State marine waters are utilized for commercial and recreational fishing, commercial shipping, recreational boating, military operations, scientific exploration, underwater/offshore engineering, weather/climate monitoring, and tourism.

Based on the success of the pilot Project, UC Davis proposes to continue and expand the California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project (the Project). Project activities are proposed to occur over a period of five years on the seafloor, primarily in subtidal rocky reef and sandy bottom benthic habitats. Accessing the Project sites would require utilization of the sea surface for transport and for a base of operations (on a dive vessel or other support vessel). From the surface, the underwater gear would be accessed by SCUBA divers and by lowering recovery equipment to the seafloor.

2.2 PROJECT NEED AND OBJECTIVES

Derelict fishing gear is defined as lost or abandoned fishing nets, lines, pots, traps, and other commercial and recreational fishing gear that sits on the seafloor, gets caught on rocky reefs, or floats in the water column. The majority of this gear does not decompose in seawater and can remain in the marine environment for years. Derelict gear impacts the marine environment in several ways: it can continue to "catch" marine animals, which become entangled or trapped; it can damage the habitat upon which it becomes entangled or upon which it rests; it can pose an underwater hazard for boaters, entangling boat propellers and anchors; and it can similarly endanger humans, especially divers. Derelict fishing gear may not only contain the carcasses of marine animals, but may also negatively affect the quality of underwater habitat (e.g. via scouring action). Derelict gear is also a visual blight, diminishing the natural aesthetic quality of the seafloor and rocky reef habitat for underwater enthusiasts.

Coordinated efforts are in place in Hawaii and Washington (WDFW 2002) to actively remove derelict fishing gear from the marine environment. The universal aim of these programs is to remove derelict fishing gear that represents a hazard to people and to wildlife and/or that damages underwater habitat, and to do so in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.

The total amount of derelict fishing gear in California marine waters has not been quantified. However, marine biologists and resource managers conducting underwater research and monitoring encounter derelict gear at various depths on rocks or lying on the seafloor. Marine engineers conducting surveys or underwater Projects report that their equipment gets caught on derelict fishing gear, and that derelict gear is seen snagged on underwater cables and other structures. A recent retrospective epidemiologic study of rates of injury due to entanglement or ingestion of fishing gear in coastal wildlife revealed that nearly 10% of all Brown pelicans and gull species admitted to rehabilitation centers in California in a given year are injured by fishing gear (Kaplan-Dau et al, Submitted).

Deliberate disposal of fishing gear in marine waters in California is unlawful. However, in the normal course of both commercial and recreational fishing operations, it is not uncommon for gear to become accidentally lost, either through the failure of lines, ropes and wires that normally attach fishing gear to rods, buoys or vessels, or the unintentional cutting of these lines by boat propellers or by underwater manmade structures. The following types of fishing gear are or have been used in California marine waters (CDFG 2001), and are therefore the types of gear most likely to be encountered as derelict. It is also possible for this gear to drift in to state waters from federal or Mexican waters. Included in this list are types of gear that were once used heavily, but are now either severely limited in their use through restrictions on fisheries, or are no longer allowed to be used in all or parts of California. Such gear may still be present, however, because in some cases restrictions did not really begin until the late 1970s, and so gear lost prior to then may still exist as derelict gear.

Gill nets: Gill nets are curtain-like nets that are suspended in the water with mesh openings large enough to permit only the heads of the targeted species to pass through. Set gill nets are allowed for use in southern California only, and drift gillnets are used in the swordfish and thresher shark fishery. Gill nets are primarily used to catch herring, swordfish and thresher shark. Historically, they were used for halibut, rockfish, white croaker, crabs and salmon.

Purse seine nets: Purse seines are nets that are cast in a circle around a school of fish, and then drawn closed at the bottom to prevent escape; the bowl or bag-like net is then hauled out of the water. Purse seine nets are used to catch coastal pelagic species like sardines, anchovies, squid, mackerel, some tuna species, white croaker, perch, smelt, and squid.

Trawl nets: Trawl nets are nets or mesh bags that are dragged at various depths or along the ocean bottom. They are used to catch halibut, ocean and bay shrimp, nearshore finfish and groundfish, and sea cucumbers. Generally speaking, commercial use of trawl nets is prohibited within 3 miles of shore in California; it is allowed within 1-3 miles of shore for halibut fishing.

Long lines: Long lines are comprised of a long main line to which are attached a large number of hooks. They are used for catching nearshore finfish and groundfish, sharks, tuna, and dorado.

Pots and traps: Various types of pots, traps and baited hoop nets are used in both the commercial and recreational fisheries to catch prawns, lobster, crabs, sablefish and nearshore finfish.

Recreational gear: Lost or abandoned gear from recreational rod and reel and pot/trap fisheries can consist of lines, wires, hooks, flashers, downrigger wire, jugs, and pots.

Project Objectives

With successful completion of the pilot phase of the Project, over the next five years (August 2008 through July 2013) the California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project proposes to help reduce the potential impact of lost fishing gear on living marine resources and underwater habitat by building upon successes to date to accomplish the following new goals:

- Enhance the function and restore underwater habitat of state and federal marine protected areas (including National Marine Sanctuaries), especially in the newly established Central Coast Marine Protected Areas (Figure 1), by recovering lost fishing gear;
- Expand the recreational fishing gear recovery effort and voluntary fishing gear recycling program to more public-access marine fishing piers and to the charter fishing vessel fleets in Central and Southern California, working towards turn-over of these programs long-term to citizen volunteer groups and the commercial charter industry;
- Retrieve lost fishing gear anywhere on the coast where it is a high priority for removal because of demonstrated or potential impacts to marine wildlife and people, including more work in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary; and
- Increase the likelihood that ocean users and enthusiasts will know enough about the Project and the issue to serve as our "eyes" on and under the water through outreach.

The proposed Project is intended to benefit users of the marine environment through the increased safety provided by removal of underwater hazards. Individual fishermen will benefit from any gear that is returned to them. As well, non-fishing industries (e.g. the U.S. military, telecommunications companies) will benefit from the removal of gear that entangles equipment and structures or prevents its placement underwater. The state resources agencies will benefit by having a program in place that reduces the loss of commercially and recreationally valuable marine organisms from state waters, and provides a higher level of protection for threatened and endangered species. Ultimately, it is the living marine resources and unique underwater habitats of California that will benefit from the removal of derelict gear that injures and kills animals or enshrouds and damages habitat.

2.3 PROJECT ELEMENTS

2.3.1 Locating Lost Fishing Gear

The presence of derelict fishing gear in the marine environment will be located using visual surveys conducted by SCUBA divers and/or by using 600 kHz sidescan sonar in water deeper than 100 feet. Gear may also be located from opportunistic sighting and reporting of lost gear by commercial or sport divers, commercial or recreational fisherman, boaters, port authorities, resource managers, enforcement officers, surfers, and others who encounter lost fishing gear in the marine environment. A toll-free hotline and website have been established for this purpose.

Figure 1. Project Location: Central Coast Marine Protected Areas



SMCA = state marine conservation area SMP = state marine park
SMR = state marine reserve SMRMA = state marine recreational management area

2.3.2 Prioritizing Gear for Removal

Lost fishing gear will be prioritized for removal based on criteria that allow for maximizing benefits for people, boats and wildlife while minimizing environmental impacts, costs, and hazards for the removal team. Gear will be evaluated as to the likelihood (low, moderate or high) that the derelict gear is:

- Posing a threat to human safety
- Presenting a hazard to navigation
- Degrading underwater marine environment (physically or aesthetically)
- Threatening endangered or protected species
- Threatening non-threatened, non-endangered or non-protected species
- Impacting sensitive habitats

These evaluations will be balanced against criteria that gauge the geographic concentration of derelict fishing gear, the feasibility of removing it, and the cost of removing and disposing it.

The highest priority for removal will be given to gear that presents a high level of threat to human safety, navigation, endangered, protected or sensitive species, or sensitive habitats, and for which there are minimal environmental impacts of removal to species and habitats, and for which the logistics of removal are not impossible, dangerous or cost-prohibitive.

2.3.3 Gear Removal – Operations Prior to Field Operations

At least 21 days prior to a planned lost fishing gear removal operation at a specified location, the Project coordinator will submit a Notification of Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Operation with the Department of Fish and Game's Marine Region managers, as well as to any other regional, state or federal agencies with management authority for living marine resources and marine habitats in the area of gear removal, as well as for vessel traffic managers (e.g. harbormasters, U.S. Coast Guard). Agencies will be asked to contact the Project coordinator with any concerns regarding plans for gear removal, and the Project coordinator will respond in a timely manner to those concerns, modifying or altering the gear removal operation plan appropriately.

Field operations would be based out of the closest major harbor with the majority of operations taking place from Moss Landing Harbor, Monterey Harbor, Morro Bay Harbor, Port San Luis, Santa Barbara Harbor, Port of Los Angeles (San Pedro), or the San Diego Harbor. Contractors providing vessel services either would operate from their home ports or would lease temporary slip space or moorage in the harbor closest to the site of planned field operations. If not operating out of home ports, contractors would mobilize vessels to the operational harbor primarily by sea, but may on occasion trailer the vessel to the operational harbor. Vessels are anticipated to be used for at-sea work a maximum of 60 days per year. During field operations on the mainland coast, the vessel will return to the operational harbor most nights. During work in the Channel Islands, the vessel may remain out of port during overnight trips and would be secured at an appropriate anchorage during the night.

2.3.4 Gear Removal – Operations in the Intertidal Zone

Lost gear in the intertidal zone may be encrusted on rocks or on woody debris, or may be partially buried in the sandy or muddy bottom. Lost fishing gear found in the intertidal zone will be removed by hand with shovels and/or cutting instruments at low tide, either by foot from the beach or shoreline, or from a shallow draft vessel. If removal efforts require modification of the beach (i.e. digging into the sand), the modification (e.g. the hole) will be filled after the gear has been removed. If removal efforts require the

manipulation of rocks or woody debris, best efforts will be made to replace the debris to its original position after gear removal. Heavy equipment (vehicles) will not be used to remove gear from the intertidal zone because of potential damage to the beach or shoreline, without permission of the California Coastal Commission and any other agency with jurisdiction in the area.

2.3.5 Gear Removal – Operations in Shallow Water

For gear removal in water depths less than 100 feet, dive teams will be comprised of a minimum of three individuals: at least one diver working on removal of the gear, a support diver on board ready to assist the working diver if entanglement occurs, one dive supervisor, and a boat skipper (the supervisor and skipper can be the same individual). If surface-supplied air is being used, the team shall consist of a minimum of four people, with one person serving as tender on the dive platform, and the dive supervisor or boat operator acting as the safety diver. Vessels will either be "live" to enable ready mobilization to pick up surfaced divers and recovered gear, or anchored with a minimum two-point mooring system, in a position that allows for easy access to the gear removal site. The underwater team will work upcurrent from the lost gear, so that when it is separated it will tend to float away from the divers rather than towards or onto them.

Expected field sites are areas where previously located derelict fishing gear has been prioritized for recovery or areas with a high likelihood to contain lost gear. Once the vessel arrives at the site, the engine would idle while 1 to 2 SCUBA divers enter the water with dive propulsion devices ("scooters") to find and/or retrieve targets. Divers typically spend from 10 to 40 minutes working underwater between surfacings, depending on their dive depth and air tank capacity, and then spend time on deck between dives to decompress, according to dive tables. The vessel idles in the dive area, getting underway frequently to either maneuver to a site where a target has been raised to the service with float bags, for winching on board, or a diver has surfaced to be picked up. Overall, the team is on and in the water conducting work (mobilizing to the dive sites, diving and conducting recovery work, resting, and returning to either the operational harbor or an overnight moorage) from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Multiple areas are visited along a given section of coastline, depending on the density of lost gear to be recovered, and/or the presence of underwater habitat on which lost gear surveys are warranted. Work is anticipated in all 29 Central Coast Marine Protected Areas and in multiple locations within Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary but could also occur in any portion of the state marine waters.

Lost pot/trap removal operations will not be conducted in areas where in-season commercial pot/trap fisheries are underway to prevent conflicts with commercial fisherman who are legally and appropriately deploying pot/trap gear.

Removal Operations

Divers will hand-remove net and line gear from the seabed by physically cutting/ detaching encrusted or severely tangled lines or nets, and/or by loosening and/or dis-embedding pots and traps. Gear can be secured and removed in one or more of the following ways: 1) attaching the removed gear to air bags to lift it to the surface, bundling large gear into sections before floating it; 2) step-wise cutting a net that is "flagging" in the water column at its base of attachment to free it from its entanglement or encrustation, and bundling the net as it is detached; and 3) "neutralizing" nets or lines that are hopelessly entangled by removing those parts of the net that are the most potentially hazardous, or securing parts of the net in closed-down positions with cable ties to make sure these parts of the derelict net do not become active at some point in the future. Multiple airbags can be attached to sections of the gear to apply upward tension on the gear to facilitate its separation from the seabed or reef. In some circumstances, it may be advantageous to raise gear from the seabed by attaching a section of already freed/raised gear to an on-

board winch on the vessel, but the winching should occur only when divers are well clear of the gear. In the case of pots and traps, the gear can be loosened from the seabed via hand-digging or other tools, and a grapple attached for hauling the gear to the surface via an on-board winch. The amount and nature of any gear left behind shall be described and reported, including GPS coordinates.

Divers conducting the removal of derelict fishing gear will be experienced or extensively trained in methods for removal that prevent damage to habitats and impacts to biota; they will have extensive experience in disentangling and/or detaching live animals and vegetation from the gear at the site of gear removal before transferring the gear to the surface for loading onto a vessel; and they will judge situations in which there is the potential for gear removal to damage the marine environment to a degree that exceeds the damage caused by the presence of the gear alone, in which case they will be able to make a decision as to whether it is more appropriate to leave the gear in place and/or disabled it in place instead of removing it.

Under no circumstances will live organisms be handled or removed from the marine environment, unless they are entangled or trapped, in which case they will be disentangled and set free. In order to provide best-achievable care for any live marine mammal, bird or reptile that is found entangled in a net and determined to have a life-threatening injury, appropriate licensed marine wildlife rehabilitators will be notified and the animal transported to their facility.

In order to prevent damage to underwater habitat, lost fishing gear that is buried in sand or mud or gravel that cannot be removed with simple hand digging by divers will be reduced by cutting it as close to the surface of the substrate as possible, leaving remaining gear buried in place, so that the seafloor habitat is not drastically altered in the process of removing gear. Under no circumstances will mechanical means (e.g., a surface winch) be used to dislodge buried or entangled or encrusted gear from marine habitats shallower than 100 feet in depth, to avoid permanent and extensive damage to habitats.

If the process of removing the lost gear is going to damage habitat more than the presence of the gear itself, the gear will not be removed, and/or it will be modified in place to reduce its harmful effects. For example, net gear embedded in sediment that cannot be easily removed by hand can be cut and trimmed where exposed to reduce its potential for entangling organisms; a trap can be secured in an open position to prevent confining of trapped organisms. At no time will gear that is completely or partially embedded in the seafloor or encrusted on a reef be removed by mechanical means (e.g. a winch on a surface vessel), because removal would be damaging to the substrate and/or would suspend sediment, and because mechanical removal has the potential to damage the gear in such a way as to make it difficult to impossible to remove what gear remains in the water.

Derelict gear that has been in the marine environment for a very long time may now serve as habitat to organisms that have taken up residence around or on the gear. Such gear has become such an integral part of the substrate that to remove it might damage habitat and potentially reactivate sections that were benign. If the gear cannot be removed in such a way as to minimize disturbance to these plants and animals, it should be left in place (depending on the potential hazard it poses to marine life or humans).

Removal efforts that could disturb sediment will not occur in areas of known contamination so as to avoid the suspension of contaminants in the water column. However, if removal of the gear has been identified as a high priority because of known damage or hazard posed by the gear, then the gear removal team will meet with the appropriate regulatory agencies to determine the best methods for removal.

Diver Safety

Only certified SCUBA divers with extensive underwater experience either with lost fishing gear recovery, commercial harvest, and/or scientific research will engage in lost gear removal operations. The University of California, Davis Wildlife Health Center will either conduct these operations or contract for these services. No individual will undertake gear removal activity that exceeds his/her experience and certification. All vessel operation will comply with U.S. Coast Guard regulations. The gear removal team will be responsible for giving appropriate notice to state or local agencies and for obtaining permission from private landowners to gain access to clean-up areas.

All diving operations will be compliant with diving safety requirements of the appropriate state and federal occupational safety and health agencies. All divers contracted to conduct gear removal shall hold diving certification. Gear removal operations will occur at depths less than 100 ft of water, which is within the no-decompression limits of the US Navy Standard Air Tables. At all times, at least one non-diving individual on the gear removal team (this person can be the boat operator) shall have current training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid.

SCUBA divers who are contracted for gear removal operations will either already have extensive experience with lost gear removal and/or underwater harvesting (e.g. commercial urchin harvesting), or will first be trained by individuals experienced with lost gear removal. Divers will be advised as to best practices with regards to underwater gear removal, in terms of maximizing diver safety and minimizing impacts to marine organisms and marine habitats. Instruction will be in the form of on-board/in-water training during the early stages of their involvement in the program.

All divers will have cutting instruments (knives, wire cutters, shears, seatbelt cutters) appropriate to the equipment being removed (i.e. appropriate to the material or gauge of the material). All divers will have a redundant air supply carried on their person; it shall be located in such a way as to allow easy access in the event that the primary air supply is cut off. Straps, hoses, clips, umbilicals, etc. will be taped and secured in such a way as to avoid diver entanglement in lost fishing gear.

2.3.6 Gear Removal – Operations in Deep Water

The SeaDoc Society may contract with commercial crab fishermen to recover lost commercial crab gear in water exceeding 100 foot depths using equipment that blows sediment or sand away from embedded traps so that they can be winched to the surface. Whenever possible, an underwater video camera will be deployed with the blower hose to first assess the lost gear for entrapped live or dead organisms, and to determine the feasibility of trap removal if the blower is indeed used to dis-embed the trap. Alternatively, if the trap does not appear to be removable, or it does not pose a hazard to marine resources because it is permanently open and/or degraded beyond function, the rope attaching the trap to its buoy will be removed using remotely-deployed cutting instruments (e.g., with a remotely-operated vehicle or ROV) in order to reduce the entanglement hazard this rope poses to future deployment of commercial crab gear and or to other vessels.

The SeaDoc Society may utilize an ROV with cutting equipment to recover lost gear at depth. All general conditions applicable to gear recovery by SCUBA divers will apply, as will techniques for recovering crab gear at depth, with the exception that the gear, once disentangled or disembedded, will be brought to the surface from the seafloor utilizing an on-board winch.

2.3.7 Disposal of Recovered Gear

A plan for deposition of gear will be made before the removal operation, to ensure rapid and appropriate deposition of the gear once it is out of the water. Best efforts will be made to repatriate lost gear clearly labeled with an owner name. Gear that cannot be repatriated will be either recycled or disposed.

Recycling of clean gear will be done at pre-identified ports or marinas near the removal site that have recycling stations. Disposal of gear will occur at public landfills only, and not in public waste containers.

To ease disposal, recovered gear will be cut into manageable pieces, and bundled to decrease volume.

Arrangements for appropriate transport and disposal of recovered derelict gear will be made prior to the removal (e.g. a vehicle capable of hauling tons of recovered material safely) and nearby disposal sites will be identified prior to field activities.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental resources, if checked below, would be potentially affected by this Project and would involve at least one impact that is a significant or potentially significant impact that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology, Soils & Seismicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology & Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use & Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population & Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation, Circulation & Parking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

As indicated in the checklist above and based on the analysis presented in this Initial Study, it has been determined that for all resource areas, the proposed Project would not result in any potentially significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The Project would require a project-specific mitigation measure for Biological Resources and the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project is included in Section 9.

4 DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- The proposed Project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment and no mitigation measures are required. A **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared. The proposed Negative Declaration is included in Section 10 of this Initial Study.
- The proposed Project **COULD** have a significant effect on the environment, however with the implementation of a project-specific mitigation measure, the potential impact would be reduced to such a point that clearly no significant impact would occur. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared. The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is included in Section 9.
- The proposed Project **MAY** have a potentially significant effect on the environment. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** will be prepared to address new potential impact(s).

5 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Introduction

The following Environmental Checklist form is based on the checklist suggested in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines to assist in evaluating the environmental effects of the proposed Project.

The Environmental Checklist identifies potential Project effects as corresponding to the following categories of impacts:

- Potentially Significant Impact: An effect that may be significant based on substantial evidence and the appropriate significance criteria. If the Project may result in one or more Potentially Significant Impacts, an EIR is required. This Initial Study does not identify any potentially significant impacts.
- Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: An effect that could be significant but with the implementation of project-specific mitigation measures, is reduced from potentially significant to less than significant. This Initial Study does not identify any potentially significant impacts; therefore, no project-specific mitigation measures are required.
- Less than Significant Impact: An effect for which only less than significant impacts result.
- No Impact: The Project does not create an impact.

5.0 AESTHETICS

5.0.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodologies for analyzing potential effects to aesthetic resources.

Lost and abandoned commercial and recreational fishing gear is an anthropogenic alteration of the coastal ocean that decreases the aesthetic value of seafloor habitats by interfering with the natural beauty and integrity of these habitats. Most, if not all, of the lost fishing gear to be removed is not visible above the water line.

5.0.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers an aesthetic impact significant if the proposed Project would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
A scenic vista is defined as a publicly accessible viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape.
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
For the property, this standard is interpreted in terms of the effect of the proposed Project on any areas of high visual quality or unique visual interest at the Project site.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

5.0.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

AESTHETICS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

- a-d) The program will not damage above-water scenic resources, or create new sources of substantial light or glare, and will in fact improve underwater aesthetics by removing man-made debris from natural sites. Underwater features with aesthetic appeal to recreational SCUBA divers (such as coral or kelp

formations) are not expected to be damaged by the proposed project because of the project practices described in Sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6. No impact would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for aesthetic resources. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.1 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

5.1.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to agricultural resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

The lost fishing gear recovery program will be implemented in state marine waters and has no connection to agricultural resources.

5.1.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers an agricultural impact significant if the Project would:

- Convert prime farmland, unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural use.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland considered prime, unique, or of statewide importance to nonagricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

5.1.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a-c) The lost fishing gear recovery program will be implemented in state marine waters only, and therefore will not adversely impact agricultural resources. No impact would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for agricultural resources. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.2 AIR QUALITY

5.2.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to air quality and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

The proposed Project will contribute to air emissions through the use of motorized equipment including the operation of a support vessel approximately 60 days per year and occasional truck deliveries of the roll-off trash containers to the harbor areas (approximately 40 to 50 trips per year). These activities could occur throughout state marine waters but would be focused around the Central Marine Protected Areas and the Channel Islands area. Current and future air quality regulations could affect the type of motorized equipment and operational characteristics of the equipments. The proposed Project would include activities that are flexible and would be structured to fit within the air quality regulations in effect at the time of each future operation. The California Air Resources Board regularly updates and adopts new air quality regulations for the purposes of protecting human health and the environment and for achieving consistency with air quality planning requirements. The lost fishing gear Project will require all contracted services (marine vessel and truck operations) to operate equipment in accordance with the currently adopted local, state, and federal air quality requirements.

5.2.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers an air quality impact significant if the Project would:

Criteria Pollutants

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.
- Conflict with local air district rules for control of PM₁₀ emissions.
- Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or Projected air quality violation.
- Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).
- Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

Toxic Air Contaminants

- Contribute to the probability of contracting cancer for the Maximally Exposed Individual (MEI) exceeding the AB 2588 and Proposition 65 threshold of 10 in one million.
- Result in a noncarcinogenic (chronic and acute) health hazard index greater than the AB 2588 threshold of 1.0.

5.2.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

AIR QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or Projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in greenhouse gas emissions that would hinder or delay the ability to meet climate change goals set by the State of California via AB 32?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a,b,c,d) Program activities will result in short-term diesel emissions from boat engines and exhaust from delivery truck (for transport of gear to disposal sites). The Project is expected to include up to 60 days of vessel operations per year with approximately 12 hours of engine use each day and will include approximately 50 truck deliveries per year.

These activities could occur throughout state marine waters but would be focused around the Central Marine Protected Areas and the Channel Islands area. Current and future air quality regulations and the location of program activities in the various air quality districts along the California coast would affect the type of motorized equipment and operational characteristics of the equipment selected for the Project. The proposed Project would include equipment and activities that would be structured to fit within the air quality regulations in effect at the time of each future operation. The California Air Resources Board and the local air quality districts regularly update and adopt new air quality regulations for the purposes of protecting human health and the environment and for achieving consistency with air quality planning requirements. Examples of these include the commercial harbor craft regulations currently being reviewed by the California Air Resources Board. The proposed Project will require all contracted services (marine vessel support and truck delivery operations) to operate all equipment in accordance with the then currently adopted local, state, and federal air quality requirements. The wide distribution of program activities, small number of annual operating hours, and use of equipment meeting all air quality requirements are activities that would ensure that Project activities would fall below the local district standards of significance thresholds for air quality effects and that the program activities would be consistent with the adopted air quality planning efforts. Accordingly, potential air quality impacts would be less-than-significant.

e) Program activities may result in transient production of objectionable odors to the public and to Project personnel from the mud and sediment adhering to lost fishing gear when it is first brought up on deck from underwater and/or stored on deck overnight prior to disposal. Once recovered from the water, lost gear may produce objectionable odors for the public and Project personnel as microorganisms encrusted

on the gear biodegrade. These odors are typical of the marine environment and are considered less-than-significant.

- f) Program activities will result in short-term diesel emissions from boat engines and exhaust from delivery trucks (for transport of gear to disposal sites). These emissions are small and would not result in greenhouse gas emissions of a quantity that would hinder or delay the ability to meet climate change goals set by the State of California via AB 32.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for air quality resources. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

5.3.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to biological resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico including coastal bays such as San Francisco and San Diego and from the intertidal zone to a maximum water depth of 400 feet. The intent of this program is to restore underwater marine habitats to their natural state through removal of man-made materials, and to reduce hazards to marine life due to entanglement or trapping. Gear removal operations may take place in marine habitats of concern, and/or within the range of species of concern.

The Project will conduct lost fishing gear recovery operations in California marine protected areas, including in Monterey Bay and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries, and particularly in the Central Coast Marine Protected Areas network recently designated by the California Fish and Game Commission. The following table provides a list of these marine protected areas, their designation, and location (by county).

Site Name	Designation¹	Location (County)
Año Nuevo	SMCA	Santa Cruz
Greyhound Rock	SMCA	Santa Cruz
Natural Bridges	SMR	Santa Cruz
Soquel Canyon	SMCA	Offshore (Monterey Bay)
Portugese Ledge	SMCA	Offshore (Monterey Bay)
Elkhorn Slough	SMCA, SMR	Monterey
Moro Cojo Estuary	SMR	Monterey
Edward F. Ricketts	SMCA	Monterey
Lovers Point	SMR	Monterey
Pacific Grove Marine Gardens	SMCA	Monterey
Asilomar	SMR	Monterey
Carmel Pinnacles	SMR	Monterey
Carmel Bay	SMCA	Monterey
Point Lobos	ASBS, SMCA, SMR	Monterey
Hopkins State Marine Reserve	ASBS	Monterey
Monterey Bay	NMS	Monterey
Point Sur	SMCA, SMR	Monterey
Big Creek	SMCA, SMR	Monterey
Point Piedras Blancas	SMCA, SMR	San Luis Obispo
Cambria	SMCA	San Luis Obispo
Morro Bay	SMRMA, SMR	San Luis Obispo
Point Buchon	SMCA, SMR	San Luis Obispo

¹ State Water Resources Control Board Areas of Biological Significance (ASBS); California Department of Fish and Game State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCA), State Marine Reserves (SMR), state marine recreational management area (SMRMA), and state marine parks (SMP); NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS); National Parks (NP).

Vandenberg	SMR	Santa Barbara
Channel Islands	NMS, NP	Santa Barbara, Ventura

5.3.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a biological resources impact significant if the Project would:

- Result in a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- Result in the “take” (defined as kill, harm, or harass) of any listed threatened or endangered species or the habitat of such species.
- Result in a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the CDFG or USFWS.
- Result in a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, or coastal wetland) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish, or wildlife species or with established native, resident, or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.
- Conflict with any applicable local policies protecting biological resources such as a tree protection policy or ordinance.
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation p

5.3.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?
- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
- f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

- a) Program activities will be conducted with sensitivity to the integrity of underwater marine habitats and to living marine organisms. Details of the gear removal operations are described in Sections 2.3.5. and 2.3.6. Any effects on biological resources will be temporary and localized at the point where a piece of fishing gear is lifted from the sea floor. Within a few minutes to a few hours from when a piece of gear is collected, the conditions at a site would stabilize with the settling of any temporarily suspended sediment and the departure of the fishing gear removal personnel and equipment. Once gear is removed the conditions on biological resources would improve because the gear would no longer pose a threat of entrapment to marine organisms.

The marine invertebrate, fish, bird and mammal species listed on the following table are federally and/or state-listed as endangered (FE, SE), or threatened (FT, ST), and are known to occur in the nearshore coastal marine environment of the California coast (CDFG(a); NMFS; Mills and Sydeman 2004).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status	Range
MAMMALS			
blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	FE	Feeds and migrates off coast; may transiently venture into shallow (<100 ft) water of Project areas.
Sei whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	FE	In all oceans, prefers offshore deep water, may transiently venture into shallow water of Project areas.
Fin whale	<i>Balaenoptera Physalus</i>	FE	Same as above
sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	FE	Same as above
humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	FE	Some year-round, some migrate off coast; may transiently venture into shallow water.
Stellar sea lion	<i>Eumatopias jubatus</i>	FT	Rookeries at Sugarloaf Island, Cape Mendocino, SE Farallon Island and Ano Nuevo Island; non-breeding adults migrate along coast and offshore.
Guadalupe fur seal	<i>Arctocephalus townsendii</i>	ST, FT	Breeds primarily in Mexico (one pup born on San Miguel Island in 1997), occasionally seen in Channel Islands.
Southern sea otter	<i>Enhydra lutris nereis</i>	FT	Endemic to California, core range within the Monterey Bay area and Big Sur coast, but sightings north to Half Moon Bay and south of Point Conception; translocated individuals living at San

Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status	Range
			Nicolas Island
BIRDS			
Marbled murrelet	<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>	SE, FT	Nests inland in old-growth redwood forest from Eureka to Oregon border, and from Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz; feeds near-shore, distribution on water varies seasonally.
Rhinoceros auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>	SSC	Breeding colonies at Castle Rock, Farallon Islands, and Ano Nuevo Island; ranges offshore year-round.
Tufted puffin	<i>Fratercula cirrhata</i>	SSC	Small numbers of birds breeding at multiple sites along Central and Northern CA coastline.
California gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	SSC	Breeds inland, but ranges and feeds along entire coast.
Fork-tailed storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma furcata</i>	SSC	Colony off Del Norte County; forages in nearshore and offshore.
Ashy storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma homochroa</i>	SSC	Endemic in California; colonies in Central and Southern CA (but not on Catalina Island); forage at sea and migrate along coastline.
Black storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i>	SSC	One nesting colony on Santa Barbara Island; forage at sea and migrate along coastline.
California brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	SE, FE	Nest in Channel Islands (although not on Catalina); range over entire coastline year-round, using shoreline and offshore rocks for roosting sites.
Double-crested cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	SSC	Multiple breeding sites along CA coast, all in decline.
California least tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	SE, FE	Nest along CA coast from San Francisco Bay south.
Elegant tern	<i>Thalasseus elegans</i>	SSC	Only known breeding colony in US in southern San Diego Bay.
Xantu's murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus hypoleucas</i>	ST; Pending before Fish and Game Commission	Nest on Channel Islands (but not on Catalina Island); some may overwinter in southern CA.
Short-tailed albatross	<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	SE, FE	No breeding sites in California: occasional migrant off CA coast.
FISH and INVERTEBRATES			
tidewater goby	<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	FE; proposed for federal de-listing north of Orange Co.	Endemic to brackish water/estuarine habitats along California coasts in water less than 1 meter in depth.
Coho salmon	<i>O. kisutch</i> (multiple runs)	ST, SE, FT, FE	Populations spawning in coastal rivers
Steelhead	<i>O. mykiss</i> (multiple runs)	FT, FE	Spawns in rivers along entire CA coastline.
Chinook salmon	<i>O. tshawytscha</i> (multiple runs)	ST, SE, FT, FE	Spawns in coastal rivers and in Sacramento River delta.
White abalone	<i>Haliotis sorenseni</i>	FE	Most at depths exceeding 75 feet, from Point Conception south
REPTILES			

Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status	Range
Green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	FT	Circumglobal in distribution, including California coast; no breeding colonies in CA.
Leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coracea</i>	FE	Circumglobal in distribution, including California coast; prefers deeper water (greater than 600 ft); no breeding colonies in CA.
Loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	FT	Circumglobal in distribution, including California coast; no breeding colonies in CA.
Olive ridley turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	FT	Same as above

Project activities could affect these species through casual and unintended interaction between the support vessel, divers, and equipment with the species of concern listed above. The vessel activities and in-water activities are typical of other activities occurring in the Project area (such as commercial and recreational fishing, boating, and recreational SCUBA diving) and would be of a minimal time period (up to 60 days per year) and distributed over a wide area (potentially over the entire California coastline). The Project will comply with all existing rules, regulations and recommendations regarding human interactions with these species (including obtaining necessary permits for activities in specific areas). Because of these factors, most Project activities are expected to have a less-than-significant effect on the species of concern.

For the white abalone (*Haliotis sorensi*) the Project could result in damage to individuals that could be partially attached to derelict fishing gear. In such an instance, removal of the derelict fishing gear could potentially cause damage to an individual white abalone the resulting damage would be a potentially significant impact. To ensure that the Project avoids causing such damage, the following mitigation measure to survey, where necessary, for white abalone and avoid all fishing gear within 25 feet of observed white abalone would be adopted for the proposed Project and would decrease the potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure 1:

Project activities located south of Point Conception, in waters deeper than 75 feet, and in potential habitat of the white abalone (*Haliotis sorensi*) shall include divers trained in the recognition of white abalone. If the abalone are observed on or within 25 feet of the derelict fishing gear, the gear will not be removed. Where possible, derelict fishing gear that is being left in place due to the presence of white abalone may be modified by underwater divers to remove entrapment hazards to other wildlife provided that such modifications do not touch or otherwise harm the white abalone.

- b, c, e, f) Marine protected areas or underwater parks may have special habitat protection measures that may have bearing on lost gear removal operations being conducted in these areas. The SeaDoc Society will contact the appropriate management agency prior to gear removal to obtain approval for the gear removal operation and ensure that planned activities do not conflict with any management or conservation measure or activity within the protected area. No Project effects are anticipated on marine habitat or habitat plan or protection efforts. The Central Coast Marine Protected Areas network was established in 2007. Marine protected areas are biologically unique, special parts of the ocean that have been designated as off-limits to certain kinds of uses in order to protect habitat and species. California’s more than 100 marine managed areas are designated and/or managed by State Parks, Dept. of Fish and Game, the National Marine Sanctuaries, State Lands Commission, State Water Resources Control Board, and by some universities, and all carry special provisions for

activities that can and cannot occur within them. The Project will obtain permission from the appropriate jurisdictional agency prior to gear removal in these areas. In all Project areas, divers will minimize impacts to the habitat as detailed in the Project description by: excavating (by hand-digging) only the part of the seafloor bed that is in the immediate vicinity of the derelict gear and is embedding the gear in the seafloor, immediately replacing any sediments and plants removed from the gear removal site as soon as the gear has been freed; by carefully moving through the kelp forests or walking on the seafloor in a manner that minimizes damage to plants; and by not removing any plants from the water unless they are attached to the derelict gear. No impacts are anticipated.

- d) To locate lost fishing gear underwater, the Project may utilize sidescan sonar in the 600 kHz range to depict structures on the seafloor, in areas where visual surveys and or search and collection by divers is not safe, feasible, or efficient. This level of sonar is the same level used in medical diagnostics, (the hydroacoustic energy applied by this Project is about the same as that produced by ultrasound transducers used to image human fetuses in utero). Marine mammals typically have hearing ranges below 340 kHz. The 600 kHz frequency proposed for this Project is above their documented hearing range. There are no documented biological effects off 600 kHz sonar on marine organisms, therefore the use of sonar for this Project is not expected to affect marine wildlife.

In order to prevent disruption of normal behaviors or ecology of any species or habitats of concern, the decision to work in the vicinity of threatened and endangered species will be made on a site-by-site basis as detailed in the Project description (Sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6) by the lost fishing gear removal Project leader in consultation with the federal, state or local agency personnel who have jurisdictional authority and knowledge of the particular species and/or habitat which may be affected by the gear removal activities. The gear recovery team will first contact local state and/or federal agencies for information on the presence of any species of concern and of habitats of special concern in the vicinity of the proposed lost gear removal, and gear removal operations will be directed away from these areas and/or rescheduled so as not to take place at a time of year when these habitats are critical for certain species.

During derelict gear removal operations, it is possible that activities may occur in the vicinity of marine wildlife species as they undergo normal behaviors, such as migration, feeding, resting and breeding. At no time will live animals be specifically handled or removed from the marine environment, unless they are entangled live in lost gear, in which case they will be disentangled and let go (or if seriously injured by the entanglement, transported live to a local licensed marine wildlife rehabilitator).

Project effects could occur in the form of minimal and temporary evasive or hiding behavior; disruption of movement (direction or speed of travel); and/or interruption of resting, feeding or nesting behavior. Such effects will potentially occur only during at-sea operations, and have the greatest potential to occur when the diver is in the water, at the gear removal site. Because these disruptions in normal behaviors will be minor and transient, long-term or permanent biological impacts to marine organisms, either on an individual or a population level-scale are not expected. Potential impacts would be less-than-significant.

Summary

With implementation of the proposed project-specific mitigation measure(s) related to White abalone, the proposed Project will mitigate potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. The proposed mitigation measure and the mitigation monitoring program are included in the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration in Section 9 of this Initial Study.

5.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

5.4.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to cultural resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

Cultural resources which may be encountered underwater will be sunken vessels, which have been documented in all of our Project areas (OSPR). Data on locations of sunken vessels are maintained by the State Lands Commission (State Lands) and by California State Parks. This Project may generate new information about location of sunken vessels via sonar imaging for presence of derelict fishing gear, in which case this information will be promptly transferred to agencies with jurisdictional authority (e.g. U.S. Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Game, State Lands Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and State Parks and Recreation) for determination of appropriate dissemination of location information to other agencies or the public.

5.4.1 Standards of Significance

Archaeological Resources

This Initial Study considers an impact on archaeological resources significant if the Project would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guideline § 15064.5.
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

A “unique archaeological resource” is defined under CEQA through Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g). A unique archaeological resource implies an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that there is a high probability that it meets one of the following criteria:

- The archaeological artifact, object, or site contains information needed to answer important scientific questions and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information, or
- The archaeological artifact, object, or site has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type, or
- The archaeological artifact, object, or site is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

For a resource to qualify as a unique archaeological resource, the agency must determine that there is a high probability that the resource meets one of these criteria without merely adding to the current body of knowledge (PRC § 21083.2(g)). An archaeological artifact, object, or site that does not meet the above criteria is a nonunique archaeological resource (PRC § 21083.2(h)). An impact on a nonunique resource is not a significant environmental impact under CEQA (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(c)(4)). If an archaeological resource qualifies as an historical resource under the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) or other criteria, then the resource is treated as an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(c)(2)).

Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines assigns special importance to human remains and specifies procedures to be used when Native American remains are discovered. These procedures are detailed under PRC § 5097.98. California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5(b) prohibits disturbance of human remains uncovered by excavation until the Coroner has made a finding relative to PRC § 5097 procedures.

Historical Resources

This Initial Study considers an impact on historical resources significant if the Project would:

- cause a significant adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5.

The standards of significance for historical resources are based on Appendix G and § 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. Accordingly, historical resources include resources listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the CRHR; resources included in a qualifying local register; and resources that the lead agency determines to meet the criteria for listing in the CRHR. These criteria may apply to any historic built environmental feature, and to historic or prehistoric archaeological sites. Properties or sites that are eligible for inclusion in the CRHR are termed “historical resources.” Under the provisions of CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(a)(3), generally a lead agency should find that a property is historically significant if it determines that the property meets one or more of the criteria for listing on the CRHR, which extend to any building, structure, feature or site that:

- is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
- is associated with lives of persons important in our past;
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

With few exceptions, to qualify as a historical resource a property must be at least 50 years old and also must retain physical integrity and integrity to its period of significance. For historic structures and buildings, significantly altering the setting, remodeling, or moving the structure may diminish or destroy its integrity. However, under some conditions, a building that has been moved or altered may still retain its historic significance. Landscaping or landscape features may in some cases contribute to the significance of an historic architectural property. Such elements would be assessed as part of the evaluation of the related historic architectural property. Archaeological sites may also qualify as historical resources under CEQA Guideline Section 15064.5(a)(3). Archaeological sites most often are assessed relative to CRHR Criterion D (for potential to yield data important to history or prehistory). An archaeological deposit that has been extensively disturbed and archaeological artifacts found in isolation may not be eligible for listing on the CRHR, because the lack of stratigraphic context may reduce the potential for the resource to yield significant data. A resource that does not meet one of the criteria for eligibility to the CRHR is not a historical resource under CEQA, and impacts to such a property are not significant.

Paleontological Resources

This Initial Study considers an impact on paleontological resources significant if the Project would:

- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature

5.4.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

CULTURAL RESOURCES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...					
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a- d) Gear removal operations will occur on/around sunken vessels only if the presence of derelict gear on the sunken vessel has been ranked as a high priority for removal based on its potential to endanger divers or boats, or to entangle marine wildlife. Permission will be obtained from appropriate agencies (e.g. State Lands Commission, State Parks) prior to gear removal from sunken vessels. Sunken vessels may be imaged during use of sidescan sonar during gear location activities; location information and imagery will be shared with the U.S. Coast Guard, State Parks, State Lands Commission, and the Department of Fish and Game’s Office of Spill Prevention and Response.

If derelict gear is located on, in, or in the vicinity of, a sunken vessel, prior to removal the Project coordinator will contact the State Lands Commission (SLC) and State Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to determine whether or not the vessel is an historic resource. If it is, then the Project coordinator will consult with SLC and/or State Parks as to the feasibility of gear removal in ways that prevent impact to the integrity of the resource. If an impact to an historic resource is potentially significant, then the gear will be left in place. If the impact is minimal and if the gear has been ranked as a high priority for removal based on its potential to endanger divers or boats, or to entangle marine wildlife, then the Project team will work closely with SLC and/or State Parks in carefully removing gear from the sunken vessel without impacting the resource. Any recovery Project with potentially significant impacts to cultural resources would not proceed to an implementation phase. Accordingly, potential impacts to cultural resources would be less-than-significant.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for cultural resources. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.5 GEOLOGY, SOILS, & SEISMICITY

5.5.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to geology, soils, and seismicity and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

The Project site consists of benthic marine habitats, primarily subtidal rocky reef and sandy bottom.

5.5.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers an impact related to geology, soils, and seismicity significant if the Project would:

- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving strong seismic ground shaking.
- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving seismic-related ground failure.
- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. (Impacts associated with the effect of erosion on water quality are addressed in Section 7.8 Hydrology & Water Quality.)
- Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.
- Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial risks to life or property.
- Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.
- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault. Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.
- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides.

5.5.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

GEOLOGY, SOILS, & SEISMICITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a,c,d,e) Lost fishing gear removal will not require the use of any processes or equipment capable of having seismic-level impacts on the seafloor, will not be located on expansive soil, and will not need to support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact would occur.

b) On a very localized level, removal of gear may result in the displacement of seafloor sediments (mud, sand) at the work site, either through inadvertent dislodging (e.g. via footsteps of divers) or purposeful removal of sediments in the immediate vicinity of the debris via hand-digging in order to facilitate its removal if it has become partially embedded in sediments. There is the potential for these activities to cause sediments in the work area to become less stable and lead to minor erosion on the seafloor. Divers will replace sediments after gear has been removed (e.g. refill any pits in the seafloor created after gear removal) in order to minimize sediment destabilization. If blowers are used to recover lost crab gear from deeper water (>100 ft), sediments or sand will be temporarily suspended but will settle back out of the water column onto the seafloor quickly. These potential disturbances would be of a small-scale and short-duration would not result in substantial soil erosion. The potential impacts would have no effect on soil erosion but would result in less-than-significant effects to sediment disturbance.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for geology, soils, or seismicity. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.6 HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

5.6.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to hazards and hazardous materials and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

Project activities will take place in state marine waters, with the majority of activity occurring on the seafloor.

5.6.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a hazards and hazardous materials impact significant if the Project would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school.
- Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- For a Project within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area.
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

5.6.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a, b) The proposed Project would disturb small amounts of marine sediments. These sediments could be contaminated with hazardous substances that could enter the water column upon disturbance from the fishing gear retrieval activities. Any disturbed materials would be small-scale in a very focused area (approximately 1 to 3 square feet at each site). In addition, some contaminated materials may be brought aboard the recovery vessel and transported to the nearby harbor for disposal. Most of these materials are expected to settle back to the seafloor and the risk to the public or the environment is not expected to substantially increase from the minor disturbance. Accordingly, any potential impacts from hazardous materials transport, disposal, or release would be less-than-significant.

c,d,e,f,g,h) Program activities will not require the transport, use or disposal of hazardous waste. Program activities, which will take place in the marine environment, will therefore not take place within 0.25 miles of a school or within an airport land use plan or a private airstrip, and will not pose a risk due to wildfires. Normal and customary operations of vessels at sea always present a potential risk of accidental release of petroleum products into the marine environment due to a vessel accident. Compliance with existing U.S. Coast Guard regulatory requirements would minimize the potential for accidental release of pollutants from vessels conducting the proposed program activities. Potential Project impacts would be less-than-significant.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for hazards and hazardous materials. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.7 HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY

5.7.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to hydrology and water quality and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project is located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.

5.7.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a hydrology and water quality impact significant if the Project would:

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.
- Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on site or off site.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on site or off site.
- Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.
- Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.
- Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows.
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding.
- Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?
- Expose people to significant risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

5.7.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a,b,c,d,e,g,h,i,j) Program activities will take place entirely in the marine environment, and therefore will have no impact on terrestrial watersheds, drainages, freshwater rivers or streams, or groundwater. No impact would occur.

- f) This Project may temporarily increase turbidity of the water in the immediate vicinity of lost gear during removal activities with the temporary dislodging of mud or sand from the seafloor, and with the hosing off (with seawater) of small amounts of mud or sand or sediment adhering to lost fishing gear when it is first brought up on deck from underwater. These changes in water quality will be extremely minor and transient in nature, and will resolve with normal settling of particles out of the water column and with currents. Nevertheless, any necessary permits will be obtained from the Regional Water Quality Control Boards prior to gear removal, to ensure that the input of sediment or mud does not conflict with regional regulations on vessel discharge into marine water. Gear removal will not occur in areas of known sediment contamination, so as to avoid suspension of contaminated materials in the water column.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for hydrology and water quality. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.8 LAND USE & PLANNING

5.8.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to land use and planning and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area.

Program activities will take place entirely within the marine environment, and therefore do not conflict with any general, specific or local land use plan or zoning ordinance that is designed to minimize environmental effects on land. As well, the program will not conflict with an applicable HCP, NCCP or Local Coastal Plan (LCP), which focus on terrestrial land use.

5.8.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a land use and planning impact significant if the Project would:

- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- Result in development of land uses that are substantially incompatible with existing adjacent land uses or with planned uses.
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.
- Physically divide an established community.

5.8.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

LAND USE & PLANNING		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...					
a)	Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Result in development of land uses that are substantially incompatible with existing adjacent land uses or with planned uses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a,d) This Project will not divide an established community and will result in land development uses that are substantially incompatible. No impact would occur.
- b,c) Marine protected areas or underwater parks may have special habitat protection measures that may have bearing on lost gear removal operations being conducted in these areas. The SeaDoc Society will contact the appropriate management agency prior to gear removal to obtain approval for the gear

removal operation and ensure that planned activities do not conflict with any management or conservation measure or activity within the protected area. No impact would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for land use and planning. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.9 MINERAL RESOURCES

5.9.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to mineral resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet. Natural oil deposits are common off parts of the central coast in the vicinity of Santa Barbara.

5.9.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a mineral resources impact significant if the Project would:

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

5.9.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

MINERAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a,b) Program activities will not involve the removal of any mineral resources from the marine environment, including natural oil deposits, and would have no effect on mineral resources.. No impact would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for mineral resources. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.10 NOISE

5.10.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to noise and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.

5.10.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a noise impact significant if the Project would result in:

- Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies
- Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.
- A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project.
- A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project.
- For a Project within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, exposure of people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels.

5.10.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing without the Project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

f) For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?

- a,b,c,e,f) Program activities, which will take place offshore in the marine environment, will not be heard on land, and will not take place within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, or in the vicinity of a private airstrip. No impact would occur.
- d) Normal and customary operations of vessels at sea will temporarily generate an expectable and usual level of noise related to the boat engine. As well, the two-way radio system in place to communicate with divers typically broadcast through an on-deck speaker so that all personnel on-board can monitor the divers' communications (for safety and operations); this may generate a temporary increase in ambient noise levels for individuals on boats in the vicinity, but is not expected to be substantial or disruptive, or to be audible on shore. The expected impact would be less-than-significant.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for noise. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.11 POPULATION & HOUSING

5.11.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to population and housing and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.

5.11.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers an impact related to population and housing significant if the Project would:

- Directly induce substantial population growth in the area by proposing new housing and employment.
- Create a demand for housing that could not be accommodated by local jurisdictions.
- Induce substantial population growth in an area indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

5.11.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

POPULATION & HOUSING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a demand for housing that cannot be accommodated by local jurisdictions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a,b,c,d) Program activities will take place entirely in the marine environment and will therefore have no impact on populations, growth or housing. Disposed gear will occupy space at local public landfills; it is expected that this will be mitigated via established fee structures at the landfills which appropriately confer levels of cost burden on entities that wish to dispose of large quantities of waste at public landfills.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for population and housing. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

5.12.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to public services and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.

5.12.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a public services impact significant if the Project would:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services.

Effects associated with recreation services are evaluated in Section 7.14, Recreation, and effects associated with the capacity of the domestic fire water system to provide adequate fire protection are evaluated in Section 7.16, Utilities.

5.12.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

PUBLIC SERVICES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a) Program activities will not require the construction of new or the alteration of existing government facilities, and therefore will have no impact on the provision of public services.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for public services. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.13 RECREATION

5.13.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to recreation resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. Program activities may occur within underwater parks and reserves where lost fishing gear removal has been identified as a priority.

5.13.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a recreation impact significant if the Project would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreation facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- Propose the construction of recreation facilities or require the expansion of recreation facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

5.13.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

RECREATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a,b) Program activities may occur within underwater parks and reserves where lost fishing gear removal has been identified as a priority. To the extent that lost gear removal results in reduced hazards to boaters, substantial increases in diver safety, and/or improvements in underwater aesthetics, the program may increase the use of these state recreational areas. Program activities are expected to enhance recreational opportunities for ocean users through increase safety and enhanced underwater aesthetics. No impacts to recreational resources would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for recreation. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.14 TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, & PARKING

5.14.0 Background

The following discussion presents the information assessment methodology for analyzing potential effects to transportation, circulation, and parking resources and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet. Access the ocean will be gained via harbors, ports and marinas from Crescent City, CA to San Diego Bay.

5.14.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a transportation, circulation, and parking impact significant if the Project would:

- Cause an increase in the traffic that may be substantial in relation to the existing roadway capacity of the street system as indicated by LOS standards for congestion at intersections.
- Result in inadequate parking capacity.
- Conflict with applicable adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).

Impacts related to safety risks associated with airport and emergency access are discussed in Section 7.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

5.14.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, & PARKING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

g) Conflict with applicable adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?

a) For disposal of recovered fishing gear, a large vehicle (e.g. a 1-2 ton-capacity flatbed truck or dump truck) may be used to transport derelict gear from a harbor to a landfill site or recycling location. This activity would result in one or two vehicle trips per day and would have no effect on area traffic operations. No impact would occur.

b,c,d,e,f,g) Program activities will take place entirely in the marine environment, and will not substantially alter traffic flow, roadway capacity, or roadway hazards. No impact would occur.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for transportation and circulation. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.15 UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS

5.15.0 Background

The following discussion presents information for analyzing potential effects to utilities and service systems and provides a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and surrounding area. The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.

5.15.1 Standards of Significance

This Initial Study considers a utilities and service systems impact significant if the Project would:

- Exceed the Santa Ana and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board’s wastewater treatment requirements.
- Require or result in the construction or expansion of water or wastewater treatment facilities, which would cause significant environmental effects.
- Require or result in the construction or expansion of storm water drainage facilities, which could cause significant environmental effects.
- Result in the need for new or expanded water supply entitlements.
- Exceed available wastewater treatment capacity.
- Be served by a landfill with insufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Project’s solid waste disposal needs.
- Fail to comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.
- Require or result in the construction or expansion of electrical, natural gas, chilled water, or steam facilities, which would cause significant environmental impacts.
- Require or result in the construction or expansion of telecommunication facilities, which would cause significant environmental impacts

5.15.2 Environmental Checklist and Discussion

UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

c)	Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's Projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h)	Require or result in the construction or expansion of electrical, natural gas, chilled water, or steam facilities, which would cause significant environmental impacts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i)	Require or result in the construction or expansion of telecommunication facilities, which would cause significant environmental impacts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a-i) Program activities will not generate wastewater, nor require construction of new water, wastewater treatment, or storm drain facilities. No impact would occur.
- f) Gear that cannot be repatriated or recycled will be disposed of in a permitted landfill. Prior to gear removal efforts, the local landfill will be identified for disposal of recovered gear. At each landfill, the gear sent for disposal would decrease the available capacity but would be within the permitted capacity. The impact would be less-than-significant.

Summary

The proposed Project would not exceed the stated standards of significance for utilities and service systems. A potentially significant impact would not occur and no mitigation measures are proposed.

5.16 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the Project...				
a) Does the Project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a Project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the Project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a) The proposed Project would not significantly adversely affect fish or wildlife habitat, nor would it eliminate examples of California history or prehistory. The proposed Project would have only minor effects on wildlife habitat as described in Section 5.3 (Biological Resources) of this Initial Study. The Project effects would be less-than-significant.
- b) The proposed Project would have no impacts that would be individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
- c) The proposed Project would have no substantial adverse effects on human beings either directly or indirectly.

6 FISH & GAME DETERMINATION

Based on the information presented in this Initial Study, the Project has a potential to adversely affect wildlife or the habitat upon which wildlife depend. Therefore, a filing fee will be paid.

Certificate of Fee Exemption

Pay Fee

7 REFERENCES

CDFG (California Department of Fish and Game). December 2001. California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report. Editors: W. S. Leet, C. M. DeWees, R. Klingbeil, and E.J. Larson. 591 pp.

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(www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/pdfs/TEAnimals.pdf) and Habitat and Conservation Planning Branch
(www.dfg.ca.gov/chpb/species)

Kaplan-Dau, Brynie; K.V.K. Gilardi, F.M. Gulland, A. Higgins³, J.B. Holcomb, J. St. Leger⁵, and M. H. Ziccardi. Fishing Gear-Related Injury in California Marine Wildlife. Accepted. Journal of Wildlife Diseases.

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NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) Office of Protected Resources
(<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr>), and from

NOAA (undated) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
<http://sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/library/national/wwhandbook.pdf>

OSPR, Office of Spill Prevention and Response, California Dept of Fish and Game:
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WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) 2002. Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Guidelines.. November 2002. 33 p. (http://nwstraits.org/derelict_gear.html)

8 REPORT PREPARERS

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9 PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Lead Agency:	University of California, Davis campus
Project Proponent:	University of California
Project Location:	The proposed Project would be located in state marine waters of California off the approximately 1,100-mile coastline from the Oregon border to the international border with Mexico and from the intertidal zone to maximum water depth of 400 feet.
Project Description:	UC Davis will operate a program to remove lost fishing gear from state marine waters in order to improve habitat and recreational resources. The Initial Study identifies one potentially significant impact to the White abalone and incorporates a mitigation measure to decrease the potential impact to a less-than-significant level.
Reference:	This Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration incorporates by reference in its entirety the text of the Initial Study prepared for the Project.
Mitigation Measure:	Project activities located south of Point Conception, in waters deeper than 75 feet, and in potential habitat of the white abalone (<i>Haliotis sorensi</i>) shall include divers trained in the recognition of White abalone. If the abalone are observed on or within 25 feet of the derelict fishing gear, the gear will not be removed. Where possible, derelict fishing gear that is being left in place due to the presence of white abalone may be modified by underwater divers to remove entrapment hazards to other wildlife provided that such modifications do not touch or otherwise harm the white abalone.
Determination:	In accordance with CEQA, an Initial Study has been prepared by the University that evaluates the environmental effects of the proposed Project. On the basis of the Project's Initial Study, the University found that the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment and that implementation of the proposed mitigation measure would reduce the potential impact to a less-than-significant level.
Public Review:	In accordance with Section 15073 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Project will be circulated for public and agency review from July 3, 2008 to August 1, 2008. Comments received during the review period and responses to these comments will be presented in a revised Initial Study.