

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Lower Owens River Project
Inyo County, California

Issued June 23, 2004

Project Summary: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and Inyo County propose to implement a large-scale habitat restoration project in the Owens Valley. The Lower Owens River Project (LORP) was originally identified in a 1991 agreement between Inyo County and LADWP. The project was identified in a 1991 EIR as mitigation for impacts related to groundwater pumping by LADWP from 1970 to 1990. The project was augmented in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by LADWP, Inyo County, and other parties. The LORP will be implemented through a joint effort by LADWP and Inyo County. The US Environmental Protection Agency will contribute funding for a portion of the project. The LORP involves four primary restoration efforts: (1) releasing water to the Lower Owens River to enhance native and game fisheries and riparian habitats along 62 miles of the river; (2) providing water to the Owens River Delta to maintain and enhance various wetland and aquatic habitats; (3) enhancing a 1,500-acre off-river area with seasonal flooding and land management to benefit wetlands and waterfowl; and (4) maintaining several off-river lakes and ponds. The project also includes construction of a pump station to capture and recover some of the water released to the river. In addition, the project includes range improvements and modified grazing practices on leases in the LORP project area

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