EXHIBIT E

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Finding of No Significant Impact

Standing Instructions to the Project Operator for Water Control

Lytle Creek Intake Structure

Lytle-Cajon Creeks

San Bernardino County, California

I have reviewed the environmental assessment that has been prepared for the Standing Instructions to the project Operator for Water Control, Lytle Creek Intake Structure, San Bernardino County, California(attached). The significant resources potentially affected include biological resources, cultural resources, land use, air quality, traffic and noise. I have considered the agency comments obtained both formally and informally, and find that the impacts that would result from the proposed action are not significant, and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

22 Jan 91
Date

CHARLES S. THOMAS
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

LYTLE CREEK INTAKE STRUCTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1. LOCATION. The Lytle Creek basin comprises 173 square miles in the north-central part of the Santa Ana River, which itself comprises 2470 square miles. Lytle Creek rises in the San Gabriel mountains near San Antonio Peak and flows southeastward about 30 miles to Warm Creek, which empties into the Santa Ana River near Colton. Near Foothill Boulevard, Lytle Creek divides into two channels: the West Branch, which is an improved concrete channel (design capacity, 30,000 cubic feet per second) extending through Colton to Warm Creek, and the East Branch, an improved concrete channel (design capacity: 58,000 cubic feet per second) extending through San Bernardino to Warm Creek The Lytle Creek basin, which lies in San Bernardino County, is located about 60 miles east of Los Angeles City Hall. The basin, which extends northward and westward from the Santa Ana River at Colton to the San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains, has a maximum length of 27 miles and a maximum width of about 11 miles. The western portion of the city of San Bernardino and the eastern part of the city of Colton are in the basin.

2. PROPOSED ACTION. Produce Standing Instructions To The Project Operator for Water Control for the Lytle Creek Intake Structure consistent with regulations and guidelines set forth in EM 1110-2-3600 p. 8-20 and Exhibit A, to present a reservoir regulation schedule. Standing Instructions are intended to insure coordination with COE water management procedures after ownership of the structure, built by the COE, was turned over to the County of San Bernardino.

The Standing Instructions To The Project Operator For Water Control for Lytle Creek Intake Structure includes a revised rating and regulation schedule for conveying federal (Corps of Engineers) instructions to the County of San Bernardino officials operating the structure for flood control. The structure was built by the COE and later turned over to San Bernardino County Flood Control District. To insure operations compatible with regional COE flood control strategies, Standing Instructions are issued to accompany the previous Operation and Maintenance Manual. Standing Instructions consist of instructions applicable to damtenders, power plant superintendents, resource managers, etc. Any physical operating constraints are clearly outlined to ensure that water control features are operated in a safe manner and within design limitations during all phases of the project life. These instructions are kept separate from O&M manuals. The operation plans will apply to physical operation and not to water control.

3. ALTERNATIVES.

1. NO ACTION. This alternative would not quantify the rating curves applicable to flows through the Intake Structure after modification of the East Branch Channel in 1976. Applicable

discharges expected at specific elevations at the Lytle Creek Intake Structure will be unknown to San Bernardino County Flood Control District.

2. IMPLEMENT THE REGULATION SCHEDULE. This alternative would properly quantify the flood flows into both East and West Branches of Lytle Creek and subsequently to the mainstem of the Santa Ana River itself. This project is an integral part of the comprehensive flood-control plan for the SAR drainage area, and would prevent all but minor damage from a flood of SPF (standard project flood) to the urban places downstream.

4. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT.

4.1. Biological Resources. Biological field surveys were conducted in association with preparation of both 1979 and 1983 Environmental Assessments for construction projects in those years; the biological environment within the channel was discussed in both those documents and is very briefly in this document.

a. Vegetation. Downstream from the stabilizer at station 3090+00, a sparse growth typical of dry, sandy, disturbed areas called shrubby riparian is located on the river floor. Species observed include white sweet clover(Melilotus albus), everlasting(Gnathalium spp), sunflower(Helianthus annus), scale broom (Lepidospartum squamatum) , tree tobacco(Nicotiana glauca) and prickly pear cactus (Opuntia littoralis). A remnant area of scattered cattail(Typha latifolia), with giant reed(Arundo donax), willow (Salix goodingii), and mulefat (Baccharis glutinosa) along with sedges(Cyperus spp.) and mugwort(Artemesia douglasiana) occurs on either side of the notched, grouted stabilizer.

b. Wildlife. The channel provides habitat for small mammals, birds, lizards and probably snakes. Standing water may, periodically, provide habitat for bullfrogs(Rana catesbiana). Some smaller mammals such as raccoon(Procyon lotor), and coyote(Canis latrans) are also likely to traverse the site. Almost certainly, feral and house pets prey on riparian wildlife, reducing their numbers and altering ecosystem structure.

c. Threatened, Endangered, or Otherwise Sensitive Species. No obligate riparian nesting birds or threatened or endangered species were observed on field surveys of the study area. Since shrubby riparian vegetation is without the understory characteristic of willow woodland associations, it would be unlikely to find yellow-warbler(Dendroica petechia), yellow-breasted chat(Icteria virens), or least Bell's vireo(Vireo belli pusillus), all of which are dependent on that substrate for habitat. Although not observed in the project area, the bald eagle(Halieetus leucocephalus) and peregrine falcon(Falco peregrinus anatum) as well as other more common raptors are known to visit similar sites. The endangered plants, slender-horned spineflower (Centrostegia leptoceros) and Santa Ana river wooly-star(Eriastrum densiflorum spp. sanctorum) have not been found in the locality by U.S. F.& W.S. for years.

B. Water Quality. The city of San Bernardino operates a wastewater treatment plant near the confluence of East Twin ana Warm Creeks and the Santa Ana River. The treated water is monitored by the city of San Bernardino to ensure its conformance with State Water Quality Control Board standards. No effects of any kind are anticipated to water quality in the Santa Ana River.

C. Cultural Resources. 36 CFR 800.2(0),Section 106 in the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act states that "standing instructions" do not constitute an undertaking.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

A. Biological Resources. No impacts are anticipated on vegetation or animal populations, endangered or otherwise.

B. Water Quality. No impacts of any kind are anticipated to water quality in the Santa Ana River drainage area.

C. Cultural Resources. A cultural resource survey by the Archeological Research Unit, University of California, Riverside (December 1975), disclosed no cultural resource sites in the project area. Therefore, no impacts to cultural resources will be initiated.

D. Relationship to Environmental Protection Statutes. All applicable environmental statutes and requirements have been considered in the preparation of this environmental assessment. The proposed project boundaries (with the exception of the area within an existing federal project for which an E.I.S. was prepared in 1972 in accordance with the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The COE has coordinated with the appropriate agencies concerning requirements applicable to the current Study, including U.S. Fish and wildlife Service and California Division of Fish and Game.

E. Revisions in the regulation schedule are to accurately quantify the amount of water present at specific elevations at the Lytle Creek Intake Structure subsequent to modification and improvement of the East Branch channel in 1976. The impact is to adequately inform S.B.C.F.C.D. that a much larger flood is now controlled by the Lytle Creek Intake Structure than as first built in 1949. With both improved channels discharging flood waters, the Intake Structure now controls 52,000 c.f.s. before the tainter gate is operated. Originally only 30,000 c.f.s. was controlled. At elevation 1151, Tainter Gate operation on the West Branch channel continues as originally scheduled to hold flows on the West Branch up to 30,000 c.f.s., while the East Branch discharges controlled flows up to 58,000 c.f.s. Total controlled flows at the Lytle Creek Intake Structure are now at Standard Project Flood level of 88,000 c.f.s. Reregulation is necessary to quantify amounts of flood waters present, but has no impact on the physical environment at or near Lytle Creek Intake Structure.

6. CONCLUSION

Because the proposed action will have no significant impacts on the channel either in the project reach or downstream, a finding of no significant impact has been prepared and included in this assessment.

7. REFERENCES

Supplemental Environmental Assessment. Supplement to Design Memorandum No. 1 for Lytle and Warm Creeks, San Bernardino County, California. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Los Angeles District), March 1984.

Supplement to Design Memorandum No. 1 for Lytle and Warm Creeks, San Bernardino County, California. Santa Ana River Basin, Calif. Flood Control. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Los Angeles District), April 1984.

Supplemental Environmental Assessment To Design Memorandum No. 1 for Lytle and Warm Creeks, San Bernardino County, California. With Finding of No Significant Impact, 30 April 1984.

Review Report for Flood Control. Lytle Ana Warm Creeks, San Bernardino County, California. U.S. Army Engineer District, October 30, 1964.

Operation Ana Maintenance Manual for Lytle and Cajon Creeks. Santa Ana River Basin, San Bernardino County, California. Flood Control Project. Los Angeles District, Corps of Engineers, March 1950.

Definite Project Report on Lytle and Cajon Creeks, Channel Improvements. Santa Ana River Basin, Calif. U.S. Engineer Office, Los Angeles, CA., 1945.

Design Memorandum No. 1. General Design for Lytle Creek Levee. Devil, East Twin, Warm and Ladle Creeks, Calif. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Los Angeles District, November, 1955.