

Chapter 11

Glossary

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11.0 Glossary

100-year frequency flood. A flood event of such magnitude that it occurs, on average, every 100 years. This equates to a 1-percent probability of occurring in any given year.

Acre-foot. A measure of water volume. The amount of water it would take to cover one acre of land to a depth of 1 ft; 325,851 gallons; 43,560 cubic feet.

Airshed. An area consisting of one hydrographic area. The Las Vegas Valley is in hydrographic area 212. The designation of an airshed is used for air quality planning purposes.

Alluvial fan. A broad, conical-shaped deposit of sediment typically found at the edge of mountain ranges, dissected by channels and composed of coarse-grained material, including sand, gravel, cobbles and boulders.

Alluvium. Any stream-laid sediment deposit.

Ambient. Surrounding or background conditions in the absence of an identifiable source.

Ambient air. That portion of the atmosphere, outside of buildings, to which the general public has access.

Ambient Air Quality Standards. Standards established on a state or federal level that define the limits for airborne concentrations of designated criteria pollutants (nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter with aerodynamic diameters less than 10 microns [PM₁₀], ozone, and lead) to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety (primary standards) and to protect public welfare, including plant and animal life, visibility, and materials (secondary standards).

Aquifer. A body of rock that contains enough saturated permeable material to transmit groundwater and to yield significant quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.

Artesian. Refers to groundwater under sufficient hydrostatic head to rise above the aquifer containing it.

“at grade”. On the same level.

Atlatls. A wooden device used to throw long, stone-tipped darts.

Attainment area. A region that meets the NAAQS for a criteria pollutant under the CAA.

Baseline. The initial environmental conditions against which the environmental consequences of various alternatives are evaluated.

Braided washes. A wash in which water flows in several dividing and reuniting channels resembling the strands of a braid, the cause of division being the obstruction by sediment deposited in the wash.

Candidate species. Species for which the USFWS has on file sufficient information on biological vulnerability and threat(s) to support the issuance of a proposed rule to list but issuance of the proposed rule is precluded.

Census block. Cluster of blocks within the same census tract. Census blocks do not cross county or census tract boundaries and generally contain between 250 and 550 housing.

Chat. Small stones.

Conductivity. Conductivity is an index of how easy it is for electricity to flow. Therefore, the higher the concentration of dissolved ions, like sodium and chloride, the higher the conductivity. In other words, higher total dissolved solids means higher conductivity, and vice versa. This means that the more sodium and chlorine contained in water the more electricity is carried, and the higher the conductivity.

Conservative substance. Non-decaying substance.

Criteria pollutants. The CAA required the EPA to set air quality standards for common and widespread pollutants after preparing criteria documents summarizing scientific knowledge on their health effects. Today there are standards for six criteria pollutants: sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀), nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and lead.

Cumulative impact. Cumulative impact is the environmental impact resulting from the incremental impact from a particular activity when added to other past, present, or future activities. Cumulative impacts may be individually insignificant, but collectively, the individually insignificant activities may become significant.

Day-night average sound level. A-weighted SPLs averaged over a 24-hour period with 10 dBA added for events occurring between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Decibel. A standard unit of measuring SPLs based on a reference sound pressure of 0.0002 dynes per square centimeter. This is the smallest sound a human can hear.

Decibel, A-weighted. Adjusted unit of sound measurement that corresponds to the relative sensitivity of the human ear at specified frequency levels. This represents the loudness as perceived by humans.

Designated Uses. Designated Uses of a water body are those uses that should be attained by the waterbody. Designated Uses include, but are not limited to, drinking water, water-based recreation, aquatic life, and agricultural and industrial water supplies.

Diagnostic remains. “Diagnostic” refers to the usefulness of the fossil with regard to obtaining information of scientific worth.

Direct effects. Beneficial or harmful impacts that are caused by an action and occur at the same time and place.

Direct impact. Effects resulting solely from the proposed alternative(s).

Effluent. A fluid discharge into the environment. Conventional treatment processes include secondary and tertiary treatment. Secondary treatment is defined here to include removal of organic loading, and may also include biological removal of phosphorus and ammonia. Tertiary treatment includes chemical addition followed by conventional filtration. Effluent receives disinfection prior to discharge to the Las Vegas Wash.

Endangered species. A plant or animal species that is threatened with extinction or serious depletion in its range and is formally listed as such by the USFWS.

Environmental Impact Statement. A detailed written statement that helps public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment.

Ephemeral. Lasting only a brief period of time.

Ephemeral stream. A stream or portion of a stream that flows only in direct response to precipitation.

Epilimnion. The upper, warmer water overlying the thermocline of a lake.

Equivalent sound level. A single number representing the fluctuating sound level in decibels over a specified period of time. The average of a fluctuating level of sound energy.

Erosion Control Structures. Flood control features located in the Las Vegas Wash designed to control erosion, and used in the overall stabilization of the banks along the Las Vegas Wash.

Evapotranspiration. The loss of water from the soil both by evaporation and by transpiration from the plants growing there.

Fecal coliform. The coliform bacteria group consists of mostly harmless bacteria that live in soil, water, and the digestive system of animals. Fecal coliform bacteria, which belong to this group, are present in large numbers in the feces and intestinal tracts of humans and other warm-blooded animals, and can enter water bodies from human and animal waste. Their presence indicates fecal contamination.

Fossiliferous. Containing fossils.

Fugitive dust. Particulate matter composed of soil. Fugitive dust may include emissions from haul roads, wind erosion of exposed soil surfaces, and other activities in which soil is either removed or redistributed.

Geologic. Any natural process acting as a dynamic physical force on the earth; i.e. faulting, erosion, and mountain-building resulting in rock formations.

Gneiss. A banded or foliated metamorphic rock, usually of the same composition as granite.

Groundwater. Subsurface water within the zone of saturation.

Groundwater recharge. Water that infiltrates the land surface and is not lost to evaporation or consumed by plants can percolate downward and replenish the groundwater aquifers. This deep percolation is called recharge.

Hafted. To attach a shaft or handle to a projectile or knife blade. To provide with a handle.

Hazardous waste. Wastes that are designated as hazardous by the EPA or state regulations. Hazardous waste, defined under the RCRA, is waste from production or operation activities that poses a potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, or disposed. Hazardous wastes that appear on special EPA lists or possess at least one of the four following characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, and toxicity.

Headcuts. Sections of a channel that are much steeper than the segments of the channel upstream and downstream, and in many cases the headcuts become vertical drops or waterfalls in the channel.

Human environment. The natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with the environment.

Hydric soils. Soils that are saturated to the surface sometime during the growing season.

Hydrographic area. Nevada has been divided into 14 hydrographic regions or basins, which are now used by the Nevada Division of Water Resources, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the USGS to compile information pertaining to water resources and water use. These regions are also further subdivided into 232 *Hydrographic Areas*.

Hydrology. A science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water on and below the earth's surface and in the atmosphere.

Hydrophytic vegetation. The sum total of macrophytic plant life that occurs in areas where the frequency and duration of inundation or soil saturation produce permanently or periodically saturated soils of sufficient duration to exert a controlling influence on the plant species present.

Hypolimnion. The part of a lake below the thermocline made up of water that is stagnant and of essentially uniform temperature except during the period of overturn.

Ichnites. Fossilized animal trackways.

Induced impact. Changes in spending from households as income increases or decreases due to the changes in production.

Impact. The terms "impacts" and "effects" are synonymous as used in the NEPA. Impacts may be beneficial or adverse, and may apply to the natural, aesthetic, historic, cultural, and socioeconomic resources of the installation and the surrounding communities. Where applicable, impacts may be classified as direct or indirect.

Impairment. An action constitutes an impairment when its impacts "harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources and values".

Indirect impact. An indirect impact is caused by a proposed activity but is later in time or farther removed in distance, but still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect impacts may include land use changes or population density changes and the related effects these changes will have on air, water, and other natural or social systems.

Infiltration. Water that falls on the land surface that does not runoff but percolates into the ground. Some of this water evaporates, some is used by plants, and some percolates downward to the groundwater.

Infrastructure. Utilities and other physical support systems needed to operate a pipeline.

Isothermal. Relating to an equality of temperature.

Intaglio. An engraving or incised figure in stone or other hard material depressed below the surface of the material so that an impression from the design yields an image in relief.

Intermittent stream. A stream that flows only at certain times when it receives water from springs or from a surface source.

Lacustrine. Produced by or belonging to lakes.

Lambing. Giving birth to a lamb

Locatable minerals. Traditional “hard rock” minerals such as gold, silver, lead, copper, zinc, and industrial minerals such as fluorspar, barite, and high-calcium limestone.

Long-term impacts. Long-term impacts are neither temporary nor reversible. They may occur either during the construction or operational phases of an activity. For example, the construction of a new building may create long-term impacts during both the construction and operational phases. Draining of a wetland for the construction of a new building will create long-term and permanent impacts on biological resources. Likewise, once operational, the new building may create additional long-term impacts such as increased population density, waste generation, etc.

Metalimnion. A layer in a thermally stratified body of water that separates an upper warmer lighter oxygen-rich zone from a lower colder heavier oxygen-poor zone.

Mitigation. Mitigation generally includes: avoiding the impact altogether by stopping or modifying the proposed action; minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Section 109 of the CAA requires the EPA to set nationwide standards for widespread air pollutants. Currently, six pollutants are regulated: sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, PM₁₀, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and lead.

Nitrates. Decomposers, which include fungi and bacteria, use these nitrogen-containing substances for energy, by breaking them down in respiration. They release the nitrogen into the

soil as ammonia compounds. Nitrifying bacteria use the ammonia compounds in respiration, releasing nitrites into the soil. Nitrite bacteria use the nitrites in respiration, releasing nitrates into the soil.

Nitrogen fixation. The conversion of nitrogen gas to forms of nitrogen that can be utilized by plants.

No impact. “No impact” implies that a particular activity creates neither a direct nor indirect impact, does not have long- or short-term implications, and is neither beneficial nor negative.

Noise. Any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing or is intense enough to damage hearing.

Nonattainment area. An area that has been designated by the EPA or the appropriate state air quality agency as exceeding one or more national or state AAQS.

Non-conservative substance. Decaying or biologically processed substance.

Non-point source. Source of pollution generally attributed to urban runoff from irrigating landscapes and golf courses, draining pools to streets, washing vehicles in streets, and hosing down driveways.

Nonpotable. Water that is unsafe or unpalatable to drink because it contains pollutants, contaminants, minerals, or infective agents.

Off-road vehicle. Any motorized vehicle designated for cross-country travel over any type of natural terrain.

Ozone (ground level). A major ingredient in smog. Ozone is produced from reactions of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight and heat.

Particulate. Fine liquid or solid particles such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog, found in air or emissions.

Perchlorate. Perchlorate is an anion that originates as a contaminant in ground water and surface waters when the salts of ammonium, potassium, magnesium, or sodium dissolve in water. One major source of contamination is the manufacture or improper disposal of ammonium perchlorate that is used as the primary component in solid propellant for rockets, missiles, and fireworks.

Point Source. Any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including, but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, or conduit from which pollutants are or may be discharged. This term does not include return flows from irrigated agriculture.

Radionuclides. Radioactive particles, man-made or natural, having a distinct atomic weight number. Can have a long life as soil or water pollutants.

Record of Decision. A public document that explains which alternative will be selected for the area of concern.

Region of Influence. The geographical area to be addressed as the baseline from which to identify and evaluate environmental changes resulting from the proposed alternatives. The region of influence may vary for each resource area.

Retrieval Shaft. Termination shaft for jack-and-bore and tunneling activities.

Riparian. The banks of a body of water.

Riprap. A loose assemblage of broken stones erected in water or on soft ground as a foundation.

Ruderal. Weedy and commonly introduced plants growing where the vegetational cover has been disturbed.

Rutting. (Rut) Mating season for deer.

Salable minerals. Common variety mineral materials such as sand, gravel, cinders, and building stone that are sold on a permit basis.

Scope. The range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in an environmental impact statement.

Secchi depth. A measure of the water transparency in a lake

Seiche. An oscillation of the lake surface that varies in period from a few minutes to several hours.

Sheet flow. A smooth flow at relatively slow velocity in which the fluid elements follow paths that are straight and are parallel to the channel walls.

Sherd. Fragments of pottery vessels found on sites and in refuse deposits where pottery-making peoples have lived.

Short-term impacts. Short-term impacts are temporary and either direct or indirect. Short-term impacts usually occur during the construction phase of the activity.

Significance. Significance requires consideration of the context and intensity of the impact or effect, under consideration. Significance can vary in relation to the context of the proposed action. Both short- and long-term effects may be relevant. Impacts may also be evaluated in terms of their intensity or severity.

Slickens. Slickens consists of accumulations of fine-textured material such as that separated in ore-mill operations. It is largely freshly ground rock that commonly has undergone chemical treatment during milling process.

Stratigraphic. Division of geology dealing with the definition and description of rocks and soils, especially sedimentary rocks.

Subsurface. A zone below the surface of the earth whose geologic features are principally layers of rock that have been tilted or faulted and are interpreted on the basis of drill hole records and

geophysical (seismic or rock vibration) evidence. Generally, it is all rock and solid materials lying beneath the earth's surface.

Sulfates. A combination of sulfur and oxygen and are a part of naturally occurring minerals in some soil and rock formations that contain groundwater.

Thermocline. A layer in a thermally stratified body of water that separates an upper warmer lighter oxygen-rich zone from a lower colder heavier oxygen-poor zone.

Threatened species. A species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Total Dissolved Solids. Solids in water that can pass through a filter. Total dissolved solids are a measure of the amount of material dissolved in water. This material can include carbonate, bicarbonate, chloride, sulfate, phosphate, nitrate, calcium, magnesium, sodium, organic ions, and other ions.

Total Maximum Daily Load. Total maximum daily loads are established when a water body is not in compliance with water quality standards. Total maximum daily loads are established to bring the water body into compliance. The maximum amount of pollutant(s) that can be discharged while still meeting water quality standards.

Total suspended solids. The amount of solids suspended in water, whether mineral (e.g., soil particles) or organic (e.g., algae).

Traditional Cultural Property. A location that is valued by some group, such as an ethnic group, because it is a place of cultural patrimony and an important place in the traditional cultural landscape.

Tributary. Any stream or wash that contributes water to another stream or wash.

Unemployment rate. The unemployment rate represents the number unemployed as a percent of the labor force.

Verdin. A very small yellow-headed titmouse (*Auriparus flaviceps*) found from Texas to California and southward.

Viewshed. The landscape that can be directly seen under favorable atmospheric conditions from a viewpoint or along a transportation corridor.

Waste load allocations. A calculation of a quantity of waste that can be discharged into a stream at a given location on a given date without violating the state's water quality standards.

Waters of the U.S. "Water such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams)."

Watershed. A region or area bounded peripherally by a water parting and draining ultimately to a particular body of water.

Water Quality Criteria. The set of conditions to be met in order to attain designated uses. Water quality criteria are usually expressed quantitatively such as scientific measurements of pollutant concentrations, toxicity, or temperature.

Wetlands. An area that is regularly saturated by surface water or groundwater and subsequently supports vegetation that is adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. To qualify as a USACE jurisdictional wetland, it must have hydric soil, be saturated to the surface sometime during the growing season, and contain wetland plant species.

Working Shaft. Beginning location and main working area for tunneling activities.