

Chapter 4: Environmental Impacts

This chapter discusses the anticipated environmental impacts of the Proposed Action in this CRMP to each resource value. Mitigations for these impacts follow each impact.

The impacts are insignificant overall because the Proposed Action was specifically tailored to have minimal resource impact. These impacts are followed by suitable mitigation measures. In addition, any benefits to resource values from the Proposed Action are listed.

The impacts of the Proposed Action are expected to be minimal, but could affect biological, cultural, and scenic values as a result of construction of visitor use facilities such as trails and access points, and increased levels of recreational use.

The Proposed Action for this Plan prioritizes protection of resource values while secondarily providing for compatible recreational uses.

Impacts from the Proposed Action may affect the following resources. Mitigations for these impacts are also discussed.

A. Vegetation

Impact: There may be localized losses of vegetation due to trail and access developments.

Mitigation: Trails will follow any existing routes as much as possible. Revegetation using native plants will be considered if necessary.

Impact: Increased visitor use may result in more off-trail travel by users.

Mitigation: Provide an adequate trail system with adequate signage, and make environmental education materials available which stress the importance of low impact use. If impacts to vegetation

from off-trail use become significant, these areas may be closed or limited.

Impact: Increased visitor use may result in an increase of man-caused wildfires.

Mitigation: Provide environmental education materials, uniformed onsite visitor use assistance and law enforcement or park rangers at trailheads and major trails during peak times. Recently a Fire Education/Mitigation Specialist position was approved for the CCNA. This position will be responsible for making visitor contacts within the CCNA and educating users about fire safety.

Benefits to the Vegetation Resource under the Proposed Action include:

a. Removal of noxious plants will benefit native vegetation by reducing competition for habitat.

b. Native oaks will be protected on existing public lands and on new lands as they are acquired.

c. Prescribed grazing will benefit native plants, as specific techniques will be employed to reduce noxious weeds.

B. Wildlife/T&E/Fisheries

Impact: A projected increase in public use may result in cumulative impacts to wildlife, especially during the breeding/nesting seasons.

Mitigation: If serious impacts to wildlife including T&E species occur from increased visitor use, seasonal closures will be reinstated. A permit process may also be implemented for boating.

Impact: Increased public use may result in increased poaching of wildlife.

Mitigation: Provide an increased on-the-ground law enforcement presence and visitor use rangers at trailheads and along main trails at high use times. Coordinate patrols between BLM and CDFG personnel. An additional BLM Law Enforcement Ranger was recently hired and has been able to spend more time patrolling within the CCNA.

Impact: Fences necessary to manage livestock grazing according to BLM's prescription grazing may have negative impacts on elk.

Mitigation: For any authorized grazing, require the use of easily removable and minimally intrusive electric fencing.

Benefits to the Wildlife Resource under the Proposed Action include:

a. Most wildlife populations will likely increase in number due to proposed habitat improvements, including seedings, prescribed burns, weed control, water developments, and riparian area enhancement.

b. Revegetation with appropriate native species in damaged riparian sites will improve habitat quality.

c. Improvement of habitat by saltcedar removal benefits local fish species by lowering salinity levels.

C. Cultural Resources

Impact: Increased visitor use may result in increased theft or damage to cultural artifacts.

Mitigation: Any trail developments will be routed away from known archaeologically-sensitive areas. Agreements will be pursued with local Native American representatives and academia to assist with periodic monitoring of these sites. Interpretation and education will emphasize the value in preserving these special areas by low impact use.

Impact: Habitat development projects could potentially impact archaeologically-sensitive areas.

Mitigation: For each proposed habitat development project, an Environmental Assessment will be prepared with review by an archaeologist to minimize any

impacts to cultural resources.

Benefits to the Cultural Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. Continued vehicle closures will help prevent damage at cultural sites. This is especially critical for certain portions of the CCNA where additional cultural resources are likely to be discovered once these areas are inventoried.
- b. Cooperation with academic institutions in the study and preservation of archaeological sites will further our knowledge of the past.
- c. Interpretation and education will help the public to cooperate in protecting archaeological resources.

D. Recreation

Impact: If it becomes necessary to institute seasonal wildlife closures, this could temporarily limit recreational opportunities.

Mitigation: Recreationists will be routed to alternate trails and other areas not affected by closures. Further monitoring will confirm the necessity of continuing a closure.

Impact: An increase in visitor use will likely result in increased visitor interactions with others.

Mitigation: Develop an expanded multi-use trail system with dispersed access points.

Impact: There will be reduced shooting

opportunities for target shooters, as this activity will not be allowed within the CCNA.

Mitigation: Recommend alternate sites on nearby BLM lands which are suitable for target shooting.

Benefits to the Recreation Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. Recreational opportunities will be enhanced by providing maps, signs, and other public information.
- b. Expanding the existing trail system and establishing additional trailheads will increase hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking opportunities, and will enhance primitive recreational experience through better dispersal of visitors.
- c. Improving boating access and facilities at Buck Island and expanding boating put in/take out facilities at Yolo County Regional Park's Upper Site would enhance boating opportunities, reduce safety hazards from boaters parking along Highway 16, and improve sanitary conditions.
- d. Restricting target shooting will reduce conflicts between visitors, improve visitor safety, and reduce trash and vandalism.
- e. Providing a crossing near Baton Flat will allow access beyond Baton Flat during periods of high water flows.
- f. Constructing universally accessible short loop interpretive trails at the

Redbud Trailhead and along Bear Creek at the Cowboy Camp access site will allow recreational and educational use for disabled users who are unable to access a majority of the area.

- g. Acquisition of priority parcels will increase recreational opportunities by opening more lands to the public and creating additional access points.
- h. Vehicle closures will improve recreational experiences by preventing the visual, noise, and soils impacts of off-highway vehicles
- i. Wildlife habitat development projects will improve fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

E. Wilderness/Wild & Scenic Rivers

Impact: Increased visitor use could affect the wilderness experience for visitors.

Mitigation: Develop an expanded multi-use trail system with dispersed access points.

Impact: An increase in the incidence of man-caused wildfires from increased visitor use could result in greater impacts from wildfire suppression activities.

Mitigation: Develop a Fire Management Plan for the entire CCNA to minimize the impacts from fire suppression activities.

Benefits to the Wilderness Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. An expanded multi-use trail network

will help to disperse visitors over a broader area of the WSA or designated wilderness within the Cache Creek corridor.

- b. Wilderness quality will be maintained by vehicle closures and adherence to BLM's Wilderness Interim Management Policy (IMP) guidelines, as well as guidelines for designated wilderness.
- c. Managed boating, if necessary, will allow continued high quality wilderness experience along Cache Creek during those periods when boating is available.

F. Soil/Water/Air

Impact: Increased visitor use could accelerate soil compaction and erosion at access points and other high use areas.

Mitigation: Reroute any problem areas on existing trails and carefully plan new trail alignments.

Impact: Increased visitor use could impact soils and aquatic habitats at any stream crossing.

Mitigation: Install foot bridges, employ practices which can successfully harden the trail base in these areas, discourage any camping within 100 feet of any perennial water.

Impact: Construction of new wildlife ponds may impact water supplies for downstream users.

Mitigation: This impact is expected to be minimal. Any proposed water developments will be processed through the State Division of Water Rights.

Impact: There is a potential of water contamination from livestock grazing in riparian areas.

Mitigation: Implement guidelines for prescription grazing which will restrict the timing and intensity of grazing.

Impact: There is a potential of an increase in man-caused wildfires with increased visitor use.

Mitigation: Implement fire restrictions during declared fire season. Through environmental education inform visitors of the dangers of wildfires. Implement foot patrols of uniformed visitor services rangers during high use periods. Recently a Fire Education/Mitigation Specialist position was approved for the CCNA. This position will be responsible for making visitor contacts within the CCNA and educating users about fire safety.

Benefits to the Soil/Water/Air Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. Proposed eradication of saltcedar along Bear Creek will likely increase water volume during the hot summers, due to reduced evapotranspiration.
- b. Revegetation of the riparian area of Bear Creek with suitable native species will greatly enhance this habitat by improving streambank stabilization and allowing

overhanging vegetation to grow. This would result in a decrease in summer water temperatures, enhancing water quality and the fishery.

- c. Repair of identified breached water developments on the Payne Ranch acquisition will lessen impacts from erosion at these sites.

G. Socio-economics

Impact: Changes in grazing management on private lands with existing grazing that are acquired by BLM could impact local livestock operators by decreases in grazing intensity, duration, and location.

Mitigation: To the extent allowed by BLM guidelines for prescribed grazing and if feasible, manage grazing using the best available science to decrease the proliferation of noxious plants. This is a benefit to livestock operators under prescription grazing by contract because BLM has the flexibility to waive fees or pay the contractor to graze according to strict guidelines for weed reduction.

Impact: Withdrawing the entire CCNA to mineral entry would eliminate any income to the mining industry. No surface disturbing activities associated with saleable, locatable, or leasable minerals would be allowed.

Mitigation: None

Impact: Prohibiting any consumptive commercial uses within the CCNA could affect small businesses such as firewood cutting and decorative rock businesses.

Mitigation: None

Benefits to the Socio-economic Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. Expansion of boating facilities at Buck Island and Yolo County Regional Park's Upper Site will enhance commercial and private rafting opportunities by providing better facilities and improving access. This would have a positive economic impact to the local economy through increased purchases of groceries, supplies, gasoline, etc.
- b. Improving trailhead and trail access, particularly within the Payne Ranch acquisition, will provide additional opportunities for commercial recreation outfitters (i.e. horseback riding, hunting, wilderness outfitters), as well as non-commercial uses. This would also have a positive economic impact to the local economy and concessionaires.
- c. Once the overall management actions are implemented within the CCNA, it is anticipated that there could be a significant increase in visitor use. This will translate into local increases in sales of food, lodging, gas, etc.
- d. Cooperative agreements with universities for academic research will result in an economic benefit in the form of paid research.

H. Scenic/Visual

Impact: The scenic quality of the viewshed from within the CCNA could be impacted by the construction of wind energy developments outside of the CCNA which would be visible from certain areas of the CCNA.

Mitigation: Prior to approval of any wind energy development on BLM land adjacent to the CCNA, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will evaluate impacts to scenic/visual resources and provide mitigations will be prepared. The public will have several opportunities to provide comments on this EIS.

Impact: The scenic quality of the CCNA could be impacted by the construction of additional visitor use facilities and the increased litter, wildfire, and fire suppression activities associated with increased use.

Mitigation: Design facilities to blend in with the surrounding environment. Stress low impact use in environmental information at access points. Post any fire safety information during fire season.

Impact: Construction of public access facilities along Highway 16 could affect visual quality along this scenic corridor.

Mitigation: Close coordination with Cal-Trans and implementing sound design standards with visual quality in mind should minimize scenic impacts from these developments.

Benefits to the Scenic/Visual Resource under the Proposed Action include:

- a. Improved livestock grazing techniques such as those recommended for prescription grazing will enhance the scenic quality of the management area, particularly along the riparian corridors.
- b. Removal of unnecessary fence lines, many of which are presently in poor shape, will improve scenic quality of the area.
- c. Cleanup projects such as removal of abandoned vehicles, equipment, and trash will enhance visual quality, while occasional littering from increased visitor use may temporarily degrade visual quality when those instances occur.

Residual and Cumulative Impacts of Proposed Action

Despite adherence to trail and facility design standards, there will be slight residual soil loss due to increased trail development and use. Cumulatively, these impacts will not be significant, given the size of the area relative to the few miles and dispersion of trails proposed.

Residual impacts from wildlife habitat development projects will vary from project to project, but will primarily be soils-related. Water developments will result in some soil and vegetative displacement at project sites. Prescribed burns will result in a temporary increase in erosion in burned areas. Cumulatively these impacts will not be significant because they will ultimately result in improved habitat and will be widely

scattered throughout the CCNA.

Potential residual and cumulative impacts to the cultural resources in the CCNA come from human and animal activities and ongoing erosion problems. Unfortunately some users illegally remove cultural artifacts found on the surface of sites. Over time the sites can be degraded through casual collecting, thus removing important valuable information about the past, irretrievably damaging these sites. Use of rock fire rings by those camping in culturally-sensitive areas can also damage these sites.