

8.0 RECREATION, PUBLIC ACCESS, VISUAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This chapter provides the environmental and regulatory background necessary to analyze recreation, public access, and visual resources effects of the project. It also evaluates public health and safety issues for this project, focusing on issues associated with mosquitoes and diseases transmitted to humans by mosquitoes including West Nile Virus (WNV). This chapter includes regulatory, regional, and project settings to provide a context for analyzing the effects of the project. Sources of information used in this chapter include applicable City of Fremont and Alameda, San Mateo and Santa Clara County General Plans, the Bay Plan, the Bay Trail Plan, and literature on mosquito ecology and control methods.

8.1 Affected Environment

8.1.1 Recreation and Public Access

All the lands covered in this Initial Stewardship Plan are being used for salt production until Cargill completes its phase out activities and transfers management of the lands to USFWS and CDFG. Some of the ponds (Alviso Ponds A9-17, and West Bay Ponds 1 and 2) were purchased by USFWS in 1979 as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and although Cargill retained the right to produce salt on these ponds, the levees have been open to public access since that time. Permitted public access activities on these ponds include wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation, environmental education, hiking and bicycling, with waterfowl hunting allowed on West Bay ponds 1 and 2 only.

The remainder of the Alviso ponds, the West Bay ponds and all of the Baumberg ponds, were owned by Cargill in fee title and were closed to general public access, except for one open trail on Alviso pond A2W along Stevens Creek. However, Cargill leased the majority of its ponds for hunting activities, with approximately 400 hunters holding leases or subleases.

Since the Initial Stewardship Plan is intended to only cover interim management of the ponds until a long-term restoration and public access plan can be developed and implemented, few changes in existing public access are proposed at this time. Under the No Action and Seasonal Pond Alternatives, no new public access is proposed. For the two active pond management alternatives, proposals include scheduled docent-led tours to many ponds and some limited hunting activities on specific ponds. For the Baumberg Ponds, CDFG plans several lottery-based hunts per year. For the Alviso ponds, USFWS will distribute a draft hunting plan and environmental document for public comment under a separate cover.

The project sites adjoin or are near to bicycle and foot trails, shallow waterways used for recreational and public access, open space, other wildlife refuge lands, ecological reserves, and public parks. Proximal to the project sites (especially in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties) are several existing and planned parks. Recreation and public access in and around the project area are described in a variety of plans that include the Bay Trail Plan, Bay Plan, and city and county General Plans.

The table that follows shows some of the factors that influence public access and recreational use of the Alviso, Baumberg and West Bay complexes.

Table 8-1
Recreational Facilities in the Project Vicinity

Site	Parks	Reserves & Refuges	Other Recreational Facilities
Alviso Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain View Shoreline Park • Palo Alto Baylands Park • Sunnyvale Baylands Park • Northern Santa Clara County Shoreline Regional Park Complex* • Alviso Marina County Park • Dixon Landing Park* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) • Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve • Stevens Creek Nature Study Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Trail (existing trail adjacent or very near to A1, A2W,, , A8,-13; proposed trail adjacent or near to A18, A19, A2E, A3W, B2) • Stevens Creek Trail • San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail • Guadalupe River Trail • Coyote Creek Trail
Baumberg Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coyote Hills Regional Park • Hayward Regional Shoreline Park • Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center • Mt. Eden Park* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eden Landing Ecological Reserve • Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Trail (existing trail adjacent or very near to 2, 4, 1C, 2C, 3C; planned trail adjacent or very near to 1, 6, 7) • Shoreline Trail • Bayview Trail
West Bay Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menlo Park Waterfront Park * • Bayfront Park (Menlo Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR • Ravenswood Open Space Preserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Trail (existing trail adjacent or very near to 2, SF2, 3, S5)

* Parks proposed in General Plans or other documents.

The newly acquired Alviso and West Bay ponds are located within the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), which includes a number of existing public access facilities, including trails, a visitor center and an environmental education center. Ponds within the Baumberg Complex are being added to the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve. This Reserve is now undergoing major wetland restoration activities that will include development of a public access trail to connect with adjacent facilities.

In addition to the recreational facilities noted in Table 8-1, cities proximal to the project sites include Mountain View, Sunnyvale, San Jose, and Alviso (Alviso Complex); Union City and Hayward (Baumberg Complex); and East Palo Alto and Menlo Park (West Bay Complex). These cities may contain additional recreational facilities and populations within these cities will likely have an impact upon recreational use of and access to the project sites.

The Bay Trail passes through portions of Alviso and West Bay pond complexes, and skirts the north and east sides of the Baumberg complex. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted The Bay Trail Plan in 1989 in support of the Bay Plan's goal of increasing public access to the Bay and its shorelines. Once completed, the Bay Trail will be a 400-mile continuous recreation corridor around the Bay, linking nine counties and 47 cities..

Depending on the location of its segments, the Bay Trail consists of paved multi-use paths, dirt trails, bike lanes, sidewalks or city streets signed as bike routes. A description of existing portions of the Bay Trail within or in the vicinity of each of the three pond complexes is provided below.

Alviso Complex A portion of the Bay Trail consisting of off-street paved or gravel trail provides a large loop route around Alviso Ponds A9 through A13, which are located within the Refuge. Other portions of the Bay Trail, consisting of off-street paved or gravel trail, are adjacent to the Alviso ponds (including Ponds A1, A2W). An unimproved on-street portion of the Trail (no bike lanes and/or no sidewalks) leads from the Alviso Marina and Historic District (adjacent to Alviso Ponds A8 and A12), south toward San Jose and Highway 237. Another unimproved on-street portion of the Trail runs along the north side of Pond A22.

Baumberg Complex An off-street shared-use paved or gravel portion of the Bay Trail ends at the Point Eden bicycle/pedestrian bridge, just south of the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center and northeast of Baumberg Ponds 10 and 11. Off-street paved or gravel trails are located between Union City Boulevard and the San Francisco Bay on both sides of the Alameda Flood Control Channel (adjacent or very near to Baumberg Ponds 2, 4, 1C, 2C, and 3C). The southern of these two trails connects with the Shoreline and Bayview Trails that run south through the Refuge and Coyote Hills Regional Park.

West Bay Complex In San Mateo County, in the vicinity of the West Bay Complex, the Bay Trail follows the Dumbarton Bridge/Highway 84/Bayfront Expressway route (running adjacent to West Bay Ponds 2, SF2, 3, and S5, and loops through Bayfront Park, adjacent to Pond 5. These segments are off-street shared use paved or gravel paths and provide access to the Don Edwards San Francisco National Wildlife Refuge.

8.1.2 Visual Setting

The Project is set within the South San Francisco Bay region. The region is surrounded on the west, south, and east by the California Coastal Ranges and on the north by San Francisco Bay. Visual resources adjacent to the southern part of San Francisco Bay vary from rural to urban. Urban area visual resources include industrial, commercial and residential developments and associated infrastructure. Also, numerous creeks, sloughs, and rivers drain into south San Francisco Bay, adding a distinctive element to the region's visual character.

Although surrounded by urban development, the immediate visual setting of the project areas is primarily rural and consists of marsh, salt pond, and other undeveloped open space. The pond management alternatives would occur within salt ponds and be surrounded by associated creeks, sloughs, bayside mud flats, and parks or preserves with public access. Ground level public streets and trails (see Bay Trail discussion above) provide views of the pond system. Some of the ponds are also visible from major highways in the South Bay and all are highly visible to airline passengers in the approach patterns for San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose airports. The ponds are striking land features, especially in early morning and late afternoon periods when the reflective quality of the ponds is increased. The colorful salt ponds make a strong first impression (not always favorable) of the South Bay from these views.

8.1.3 Public Health

Other than potential impacts from mosquitos, the proposed project is not expected to impact public health or safety. This section, therefore, focuses on public nuisances associated with mosquitoes and diseases transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, including West Nile Virus (WNV).

Mosquito-Borne Diseases—Compared with the historical levels of mosquito-borne diseases in humans, levels of mosquito-borne diseases now in California are extremely low. These diseases, including encephalitis and malaria, however, are still present or could be readily reintroduced. (Bohart and Washino 1978, Sacramento-Yolo County Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control District 1990.)

Most recently, the spread of West Nile Virus (WNV) has increased concern over mosquito abatement for the protection of wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The California Department of Health Services (CDHS), in collaboration with the University of California, Davis, California Department of Food and Agriculture, local mosquito and vector control districts and other state and local agencies, has launched a comprehensive surveillance program to monitor for WNV in California. WNV has been detected in animals in several southern California counties in 2003 and is anticipated to spread to northern California counties in 2004.

Mosquito Abatement Districts in the Project Area—The project area is in the jurisdictions of the Alameda and San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement Districts (MADs) and Santa Clara County Vector Control District. These districts are governmental organizations formed at the local level that are responsible for controlling specific disease vectors within their jurisdiction. MADs receive most of their revenue from property taxes and are primarily responsible for controlling mosquitoes as pest species and as disease vectors. In the project area, MAD mosquito abatement efforts are primarily focused on controlling mosquitoes that can transmit malaria, WNV and several types of encephalitis or cause a substantial nuisance in surrounding communities.

The decision to control mosquitoes as a nuisance to human populations is at the discretion of each local MAD. Factors influencing this decision may include the number of service calls received from a given locality, the proximity of mosquito sources to population centers, the availability of funds for abatement, the density of mosquito larvae present in a mosquito production source, and the number of adult mosquitoes captured per night in light traps (Jones & Stokes Associates 1995). Once a recurring mosquito production source has been identified, abatement schedules are often adopted and maintained for that source (Jones & Stokes Associates 1995).

Mosquito Species in the Project Area—The two primary pest mosquitoes produced in the project areas have long flight ranges and are very aggressive biters, though they are less likely to carry diseases than fresh or brackish marsh mosquitos: winter salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes squamiger*) and the salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes dorsalis*). Two additional mosquito species are associated with marsh habitats, but prefer fresh to brackish water, and cause more localized problems: winter marsh mosquito (*Culiseta inornata*) and encephalitis mosquito (*Culex tarsalis*). The control of these latter species is a high priority locally.

Favorable Environmental Conditions for Mosquitoes—All species of mosquitoes require standing water to complete their growth cycle; therefore, any body of standing water represents a potential mosquito breeding site. Areas that pond surface water but are flushed by daily tides are not stagnant for periods sufficient for mosquito larvae to mature; therefore, such areas are not likely to be mosquito production sources (Maffei pers. comm.). Similarly, ponds that are subject to constant wind-driven wave action are also unlikely to produce many mosquitoes.

Water quality affects the productivity of a potential mosquito-breeding site. Typically, greater numbers of mosquitoes are produced in water bodies with poor circulation, higher temperatures, and higher organic content (and therefore with poor water quality) than in water bodies having good circulation, lower temperatures, and lower organic content (Collins and Resh 1989). Irrigation and flooding practices may also influence the level of mosquito production associated with a water body. Typically, greater numbers of mosquitoes are produced in water bodies with water levels that slowly increase or recede than in water bodies with water levels that are stable or that rapidly fluctuate (Jones & Stokes Associates 1995). Additionally, the types of vegetation growing in standing ponds can have major effects on mosquito production. For instance, mosquitoes will not reproduce in areas with an abundance of California cordgrass, but they will reproduce in areas growing saltgrass and pickleweed (Maffei, Wes. Manager. Napa County Mosquito Abatement District. Napa, California. March 4, 2002—telephone conversation cited in Napa River Salt Marsh Restoration Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, Jones & Stokes; February 2003).

Mosquitoes are adapted to breed during periods of temporary flooding and can complete their life cycles before water evaporates and predator populations become well established. Poor drainage conditions that result in ponding water and water management practices associated with the creation of seasonal wetlands for waterfowl use result in the types of flooding that can produce problem numbers of mosquitoes (Jones & Stokes Associates 1995). Permanent bodies of open water that have good water quality (good circulation, low temperatures, and low organic content) typically sustain stable nutrient content and support rich floral and faunal species diversity, including mosquito predators and pathogens. Wave action across larger bodies of water physically retards mosquito production by inhibiting egg-laying and larval survival (Jones & Stokes Associates 1995).

Conditions in the Project Area—Mosquito problems rarely occur in the project areas because of the lack of vegetation in the ponds, the high salinity levels, and the broad wind fetch in the ponds. When outbreaks do occur, they are usually associated with the marsh areas that run between and around the pond systems. For adjacent marshes, the goal is to maintain effective mosquito control with a minimum of pesticide treatments and the least vehicular intrusion into the salt marshes.

8.2 Criteria for Determining Significance of Effects

The impacts of the project on recreation and public access, visual setting, and public health and safety were analyzed qualitatively. Criteria based on the State CEQA Guidelines and professional judgment were used to determine the significance of impacts. Criteria used for each of the impact areas are presented below.

8.2.1 Recreation and Public Access

The proposed project would have a significant impact on recreation and public access if it would:

- 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.
- Substantially reduce existing public access to the Bay.

8.2.2 Visual Setting

The proposed project would have a significant impact on visual resources if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

8.2.3 Public Health and Safety

The project would be considered to have a significant impact if habitat changes would necessitate substantially increasing levels of mosquito abatement programs to maintain mosquito populations at pre-project levels. Habitat changes that could result in a substantial decline of available mosquito breeding habitat or greater efficiency of the three county's MAD's abatement program would be considered beneficial impacts.

8.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Recreation and Public Access—All four alternatives under consideration would be consistent with existing recreational use and policies and plans pertaining to recreational use of the project area. Portions of the project will be annexed to the Refuge and to the Ecological Reserve regardless of the alternative selected. Proposed alignments of the Bay Trail are located along routes that traverse or pass by the project sites, as discussed in Section 6.1, and these proposed alignments would not be directly affected by any of the project alternatives. However, under the No Project/No Action Alternative, levees with existing public access would not be maintained. If these levees eroded and/or breached, public access to these levee segments, including the Bay Trail segments, would be lost.

Therefore, the impact of the No Project/No Action alternative is potentially significant.

Both pond management alternatives include a limited amount of additional public access to the project area, including docent-led tours and controlled waterfowl hunting in some ponds. This increase in public access is considered to be a beneficial impact.

The project alternatives would not promote an increase in the use of recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of a recreational facility would occur or be accelerated.

The project alternatives would result in changes to wildlife habitat, which could have species-specific impacts on wildlife populations and concomitant mixed (beneficial and negative) impacts to wildlife-dependent recreational uses of the project areas (e.g., duck

hunting and bird watching). The species-specific impacts will tend to cancel each other out in terms of significant recreational impacts, so that the impacts of wildlife changes to recreational use of the project areas can be said to be less than significant.

The three pond management alternatives (Alternatives 1-3) would cause temporary impacts to public access and recreation from changes in access during construction of proposed water control structures. However, because these impacts would be very limited in area and duration, they are deemed less than significant.

Visual Setting—The project alternatives would not cause an obstruction to any major viewsheds. The alternatives would all result in substantial changes to existing views from various locations; however, it cannot be clearly said whether these changes would be positive or negative. The color of some of the ponds, as viewed from an airplane, is expected to change from red or green to match the colors of bay waters. Those who enjoy the existing colors may be concerned about the change, while others will enjoy a more natural view of the Bay. To the extent that views of the project area are enhanced by the presence of an abundance and diversity of birds and other wildlife, alternatives that support an abundance and diversity of wildlife would have the least negative impact, and possibly a positive visual impact.

The two-pond management alternatives (Alternatives 2-3) would cause temporary impacts to the quality of project area views during construction of proposed water control structures. However, because these impacts would be very limited in area and duration, they are deemed less than significant.

Public Health— The proximity of human and animal activity to the project sites and the sites' potential as a vector for mosquito breeding is a potential concern for planning at these locations..

The project will not directly impact the numbers of people who come in contact with mosquitoes. Indirectly, incorporation of the project area into two publicly- managed sites (the Refuge and the Ecological Reserve), would likely boost the numbers of people who visit the project areas. However, this is likely to occur regardless of whether the No Project or one of the other project alternatives is selected. As discussed in Section 8.1, above, mosquito production is higher in water bodies with poor circulation, higher temperatures, and higher organic content. On the other hand, higher salinities can have the effect of inhibiting mosquito production. To the degree that the project alternatives maintain or improve water quality within the salt ponds, there would be less potential impacts to public health.

8.3.1 No-Project/No Action Alternative

RECREATION IMPACT-1. Recreational use and views of the project areas may be impacted from the loss of levee trail access..

Public access to the project areas could be affected by this alternative. Under this alternative, ponds would be expected to dry out and water structures would deteriorate, ultimately reducing USFWS' and CDFG's ability to manage water and salinity levels for wildlife. In the long term, if not maintained, the pond levees are likely to fail, with the result that levees presently open to public access will no longer be accessible.

Significance: Potentially significant. Since this alternative will result in the project not being implemented, no mitigation measures are proposed.

RECREATION IMPACT-2. Recreational use and views of the project areas may be impacted as a consequence of changes in wildlife populations.

Under this alternative, the ponds are expected to dry in the summer and fill with rainwater in the winter. The result of anticipated short-term and long-term events is that habitat for some waterbirds would improve, while habitat for other waterbirds would deteriorate, as discussed in greater detail in Section 6.3, Wildlife. Impacts to wildlife-related recreation in the project areas, such as duck hunting and bird watching, would likewise be a mixture of positive and negative impacts.

Significance: Less than significant.

VISUAL IMPACT-1. The quality of views of the project areas may be impacted as a consequence of changes in wildlife populations.

Under this alternative, when seasonal ponds dry down completely, they would likely support fewer species of birds and other wildlife than they currently do. Therefore, in the shorter term, there may be indirect impacts to the visual setting (to the degree that the presence of birds and wildlife enhance the visual setting). Note that in the long-term, lack of maintenance for levees would result in the levees being breached and ponds opened to tidal influence, creating conditions more favorable for some birds and wildlife. However, it is not known when this would occur. This impact is expected to be less than significant.

Significance: Less than significant.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT-1. As the seasonal ponds dry down, increased mosquito production may result from deterioration of pond water quality, requiring the MADs to undertake additional mosquito control and abatement efforts.

This alternative could produce more favorable conditions for mosquito production, at least in the short term. All the ponds would become unmanaged seasonal ponds. As they dry down, the seasonal ponds would have worse circulation, higher temperatures, and higher organic content; all favorable conditions for mosquitoes. Since the water levels could not be managed under this alternative, no management responses to increased mosquito production could be made. Note that in the long-term, lack of maintenance for levees would result in the levees being breached and ponds opened to tidal influence, creating conditions less favorable for mosquitoes. However, it is not known when this would occur.

Significance: Significant. Since this alternative will result in the project not being implemented, no mitigation measures are proposed.

8.3.2 Seasonal Ponds Alternative

Under this alternative, the levees would continue to be maintained and existing public access would not be threatened. Impacts on recreational wildlife viewing under this alternative are expected to be similar to those under the No Project/No Action Alternative. In the long-term, the changes to wildlife habitat and wildlife will be different under this alternative since levees would be maintained and would not be allowed to

deteriorate and become breached. However, this is not expected to change the magnitude of impacts to recreational use of the project areas or to visual impacts.. All the ponds would be allowed to become unmanaged seasonal ponds under this alternative.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT-1. As the seasonal ponds dry down, increased mosquito production may result from deterioration of pond water quality, requiring the MADs to undertake additional mosquito control and abatement efforts.

Like the No Project/No Action alternative could produce more favorable conditions for mosquito production. As they dry down the seasonal ponds would have worse circulation, higher temperatures, and higher organic content; all favorable conditions for mosquitoes. Since water levels could not be managed under this alternative, no management responses would be possible.

Significance: Significant.

PUBLIC HEALTH MITIGATION MEASURE-1. Coordinate project activities with the county MADs.

USFWS and CDFG will coordinate with county MADs during the implementation, and operations phases of the project. Specifically, they will:

- Permit county MADs to have access to the project area to monitor or control mosquito populations.
- Consult with county MADs regularly to identify mosquito management problems, mosquito monitoring and abatement procedures
- Consult with the MADs to identify opportunities to share costs, obtain the necessary permits from the Corps, BCDC, the San Francisco Bay RWQCB, and USFWS, and otherwise participate in implementing mosquito abatement programs, if it is necessary for county MADs to increase mosquito monitoring and control programs beyond pre-project levels.

Post-Mitigation Significance: Potentially significant, since no water management options would be available under this alternative.

8.3.3 Alternative 2 (Simultaneous March-April Initial Release)

Under this alternative, a limited amount of additional public access would be available, included docent-led tours and waterfowl hunting,

There may be temporary and very minor impacts to recreational use of the project areas due to changes in access during construction of water control structures under this alternative. Construction would also temporarily change the quality of views of the project areas. Construction would be very limited in scope and duration; thus, impacts would be less than significant.

MADs in the project areas would experience positive impacts from this alternative since changes in pond hydrology and water quality would result in less favorable conditions for mosquito production. This is considered a beneficial public health impact.

BENEFICIAL RECREATION IMPACT -1. Additional public access will be available on previously closed private lands .

Since this is a beneficial impact, no mitigation is necessary.

RECREATION IMPACT-3. Recreational use and views of the project areas may be impacted as a consequence of changes in wildlife populations.

Under this alternative, pond salinities would be reduced, with the result that habitat for some waterbirds would improve, while habitat for other waterbirds would deteriorate, as discussed in greater detail in Section 6.3, Wildlife. Impacts to wildlife-related recreation in the project areas, such as duck hunting and bird watching, would likewise be a mixture of positive and negative impacts and would be less than significant overall.

Significance: Less than significant.

RECREATION IMPACT-4. Construction of proposed water control structures would have temporary effects on public access to and recreational use of the project areas.

Access restrictions during construction would be limited to specific areas surrounding the construction activities and would last for a period of days to months. There may be restricted access to parts of the Refuge during these times. The public would have access to the majority of the site and the Refuge during construction activities. Once the activities are completed, public access would resume as before.

Significance: Less than significant.

Although mitigation is not required for less-than-significant impacts, the following measure is proposed to further reduce the impact described above.

RECREATION MITIGATION MEASURE-1. Prepare a Public Access Plan for project construction activities.

Before beginning construction, the contractor will develop, in consultation with the appropriate representative(s) of USFWS and/or CDFG, a plan indicating how public access to the Bay Trail and proximal roads, trails, paths, and park areas will be maintained during construction work. If needed, flaggers will be stationed near the construction activity areas to direct and assist members of the public around these areas while maintaining public access.

VISUAL IMPACT-1. The quality of views of the project areas may be impacted as a consequence of changes in wildlife populations and in pond colors.

The project areas would continue to support an abundance and diversity of wildlife, including birds. Therefore, impacts to the quality of the visual setting, which relies to some extent on this diversity and abundance of wildlife, would be less than significant. Changes in pond colors may be seen as an improvement, while others will miss the visually striking reds and oranges. Since the project will return the pond colors to more natural conditions, the impacts would be less than significant.

Significance: Less than significant.

VISUAL IMPACT-2. Construction of proposed water control structures would have temporary effects on the quality of views of the project areas.

Construction activity, such as the operation of heavy equipment and material storage, would temporarily change the visual character of the area; however, these effects would be temporary and the project is not located in a designated scenic area. It is anticipated

that areas disturbed by construction activities would re-vegetate naturally. Therefore, construction would not cause a permanent effect on the visual quality of the area.

Significance: Less than significant.

In Alternative 2, those ponds managed as seasonal ponds could produce more favorable conditions for mosquito production. As they dry down the seasonal ponds would have less circulation, higher temperatures, and higher organic content; all favorable conditions for mosquitoes.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT-3. As the seasonal ponds dry down, increased mosquito production may result requiring the MADs to undertake additional mosquito control and abatement efforts.

Several ponds are to be managed as seasonal ponds in this proposed alternative, with water added during winter and ponds drying by evaporation during the summer. The conditions created in seasonal ponds proposed under this alternative may be conducive to mosquito production in those ponds.

Significance: Potentially significant.

PUBLIC HEALTH MITIGATION MEASURE-2. Coordinate project activities with the county MADs.

USFWS and CDFG will coordinate with county MADs during the implementation and operations phases of the project. Specifically, they will:

- Permit county MADs to have access to the project area to monitor or control mosquito populations.
- Consult with county MADs regularly to identify mosquito management problems, mosquito monitoring and abatement procedures, and opportunities to adjust water management practices in non-tidal wetlands to reduce mosquito production during problem periods.
- Consult with the MADs to identify opportunities to share costs, obtain the necessary permits from the Corps, BCDC, the San Francisco Bay RWQCB, and USFWS, and otherwise participate in implementing mosquito abatement programs, if it is necessary for county MADs to increase mosquito monitoring and control programs beyond pre-project levels.

Post-Mitigation Significance: Less than significant.

8.3.4 Alternative 3 (Phased Initial Release)

Impacts to recreation/public access, visual resources, and public health would be similar to Alternative 2. The timing of initial discharge would not change the nature or severity of these impacts.