

3.10 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

This section of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/R) characterizes the existing socioeconomic and environmental justice conditions within the Phase 2 project area and analyzes whether the project would cause a substantial adverse effect on population, employment, housing, or minority and low-income populations in the project area. The information presented is based on a review of existing socioeconomic data for the project area and other pertinent federal, state and local regulations, which are presented in the regulatory framework setting section. Using this information as context, an analysis of the socioeconomic and environmental justice environmental impacts of the project is presented for each alternative. Program-level mitigation measures described in Chapter 2, Alternatives, would be implemented with the project. Therefore, this section only discusses additional mitigation measures as needed.

3.10.1 Physical Setting

Methodology

Socioeconomics

The socioeconomic analysis describes the potential impacts of the project on population growth, employment, and housing in the counties, cities, and census tracts within 1 mile of the edge of each of the pond clusters included in Phase 2. Impacts to the socioeconomic climate are also covered to the extent that the project relates to the businesses in the surrounding communities. Local citywide populations, defined as those cities with a census tract within 1 mile of the edge of each Phase 2 pond cluster, are as follows:

- Alviso-Island Ponds: Fremont; Alviso-Mountain View Ponds: Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale;
- Alviso-A8 Ponds: Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose; and
- Ravenswood Ponds: Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.

Environmental Justice

This subsection provides an overview of minority and low-income populations in the Phase 2 area of the SBSP Restoration Project. Specifically, data from the 2010 Census and 2006–2010 American Community Survey are presented to demonstrate the difference, if any, between percentage of minority and low-income populations in census tracts within 1 mile of the edge of each of the four pond clusters and the percentage of those same populations in the cities within 1 mile of the edge of each of the pond clusters.

Project Setting

Socioeconomics

The Phase 2 pond clusters are in four separate locations. The socioeconomic climate around these project areas are those of developed communities, as shown by the low population increases in the past 10 years (Table 3.10-1). Employment has remained consistent through the 10-year period. Of the four pond clusters assessed in Phase 2, only the Ravenswood pond cluster has a large percentage (32.7 percent) of a

local citywide population within 1 mile of the cluster (East Palo Alto). The remaining three pond clusters all have a low percentage of the citywide population within 1 mile of the edge of the ponds (Table 3.10-2).

Table 3.10-1 County and City Populations and Labor Forces

CITY AND COUNTY	POPULATION		EMPLOYED POPULATION	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
San Mateo County	707,161	718,451	361,640	360,951
Redwood City	75,402	76,815	40,100	37,869
Menlo Park	30,785	32,026	15,429	15,811
East Palo Alto	29,506	28,155	11,349	12,473
Santa Clara County	1,682,585	1,781,642	843,912	843,854
Palo Alto	58,598	64,403	31,369	30,047
Mountain View	70,708	74,066	41,126	40,539
Sunnyvale	131,760	140,081	72,756	70,911
Santa Clara	102,361	116,468	55,528	57,175
San Jose	894,943	945,942	436,890	446,962
Alameda County	1,443,741	1,510,271	692,833	716,257
Fremont	203,413	214,089	102,187	103,208

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000a, 200b, 2010.

Table 3.10-2 Phase 2 SBSP Project Census Tract Population

POND CLUSTER	LOCAL CITYWIDE POPULATION	POPULATION IN SBSP CENSUS TRACTS (WITHIN 1 MILE OF PONDS)	PERCENT OF CITYWIDE POPULATIONS IN SBSP CENSUS TRACTS (%)
Alviso-Island Ponds	214,089 ¹	7,533	3.5
Alviso-Mountain View Ponds	278,550 ²	18,243	6.6
Alviso-A8 Ponds	1,202,491 ³	28,677	2.4
Ravenswood Ponds	136,996 ⁴	44,813	32.7

Notes:
¹ Made up of Fremont.
² Made up of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.
³ Made up of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose.
⁴ Made up of Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.

Environmental Justice

Table 3.10-3 compares the percentage of non-white residents living in census tracts within 1 mile of the four pond clusters with the percentage of non-white residents in the surrounding cities. Only the Alviso-Island Ponds show a higher percentage of non-white residents within 1 mile of the ponds than in the

surrounding cities. Figure 3.10-1 shows the concentrations of non-white residents in SBSP census tracts. Table 3.10-4 compares the percentage of individuals living below the poverty level (according to the 2006–2010 American Community Survey) in census tracts that are within 1 mile of the pond clusters with the percentage of individuals living below the poverty level in the surrounding cities. Both the Alviso-Island Ponds and the Ravenswood Ponds show a higher percentage of individuals living below the poverty level within 1 mile of the ponds than in the surrounding cities.

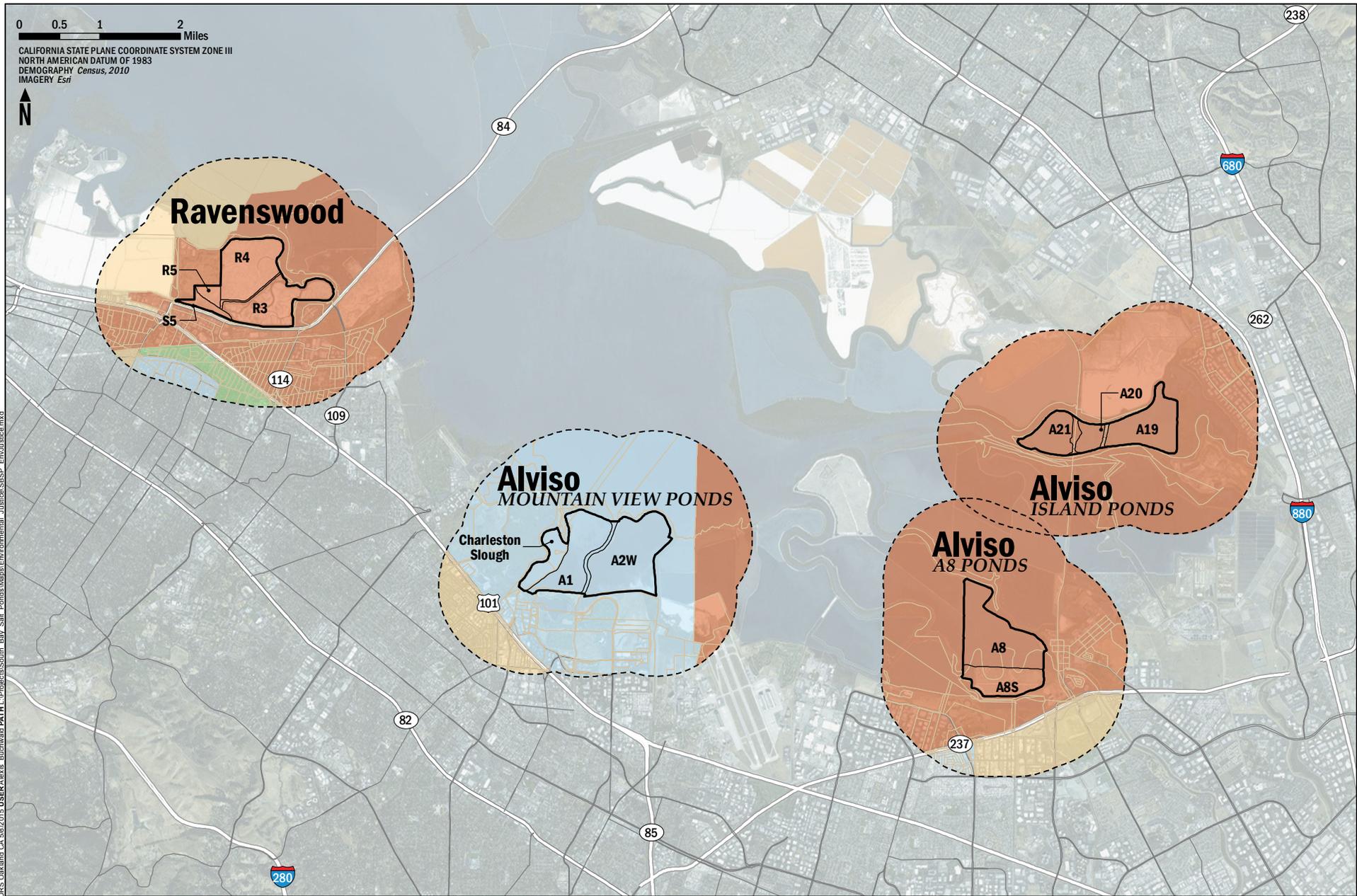
Table 3.10-3 Phase 2 SBSP Project Non-White Population

POND CLUSTER	PERCENT OF CITYWIDE POPULATION THAT IS NON-WHITE	SBSP CENSUS TRACT POPULATION THAT IS NON-WHITE
Alviso-Island Ponds	73.5 ¹	80.6
Alviso-Mountain View Ponds	56.4 ²	47.3
Alviso-A8 Ponds	69.9 ³	60.6
Ravenswood Ponds	59.6 ⁴	51.8
Notes:		
¹ Made up of Fremont.		
² Made up of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.		
³ Made up of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose.		
⁴ Made up of Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.		

Table 3.10-4 Phase 2 SBSP Population Below Poverty Level

POND CLUSTER	PERCENT OF CITYWIDE POPULATION THAT IS BELOW POVERTY LINE	SBSP CENSUS TRACT POPULATION THAT IS BELOW POVERTY LINE
Alviso-Island Ponds	5.2 ¹	7.8
Alviso-Mountain View Ponds	6.0 ²	5.7
Alviso-A8 Ponds	9.7 ³	6.8
Ravenswood Ponds	9.9 ⁴	14.9
Notes:		
¹ Made up of Fremont.		
² Made up of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.		
³ Made up of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose.		
⁴ Made up of Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.		

For the purposes of this analysis, an area with a non-white population exceeding 50 percent and higher than that of the citywide population is considered to have a minority population. By that definition, only the areas nearby the Alviso-Island Ponds would have a minority population. Low-income areas are defined as those where the percentage of the population below the poverty line exceeds the citywide average. Both the Alviso-Island Ponds and the Ravenswood Ponds have nearby populations classified as low-income areas under this definition.



LEGEND

1-Mile buffer of Project Area	Environmental Justice	2 - Medium Low Minority Density
Phase 2 Project Area	by Census block	3 - Medium High Minority Density
Census block	1 - Low Minority Density	4 - High Minority Density

Figure 3.10-1
 Census Block Minority Population Densities
 In Comparison To Surrounding Cities

3.10.2 Regulatory Setting

Relatively few of the cities that surround the SBSP Restoration Project include relevant strategies, policies, or implementation measures pertaining to environmental justice in their general plans. Those that do are discussed below.

Federal Regulations

Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994), requires all federal agencies to seek to achieve environmental justice by "...identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations."

State Regulations

There are no specific requirements for the analysis of socioeconomic and environmental justice issues under state law. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15131(a) through (c) provides guidance on the discussion of economic and social effects in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (AEP 2014). Specifically, such effects may be included in an EIR but "shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment." However, economic and social effects may be used to determine the significance of physical changes caused by a project, but these changes "need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect." CEQA Guidelines provide for the consideration of economic, social, and particularly housing factors, together with technological and environmental factors, to determine whether changes in a project are feasible to reduce or avoid the significant effects on the environment identified in the EIR.

Regional/Local Regulations

This section discusses the policies related to socioeconomics and environmental justice in the cities surrounding the Phase 2 activities.

City of San Jose. The Housing Goals in the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan (City of San Jose 2011) provides the following goal pertaining to environmental justice:

Housing Goal:

- H-1.1 Through the development of new housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing, facilitate the creation of economically, culturally, and demographically diverse and integrated communities.

City of Santa Clara. The Residential Land Use Goals and Policies of the City of Santa Clara General Plan (City of Santa Clara 2010) provide the following goals pertaining to environmental justice:

- 5.3.2-G1: Equitable housing opportunities within the community for persons of all economic levels, regardless of religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, race, color, age, source of income or mental or physical disability.

City of Sunnyvale. The Housing Element of the City of Sunnyvale General Plan (City of Sunnyvale 2011) includes the following relevant goals, policies, and action statements related to environmental justice:

GOAL HE-1: Adequate Housing — Assist in the provision of adequate housing to meet the diverse needs of Sunnyvale’s households of all income levels.

Policy HE-1.2: Facilitate the development of affordable housing through regulatory incentives and concessions, and/or financial assistance.

Policy HE-1.3: Utilize the Below Market Rate Housing requirements as a tool to integrate affordable units within market rate developments, and increase the availability of affordable housing throughout the community.

Policy HE-1.4: Continue to require office and industrial development to mitigate the demand for affordable housing.

GOAL HE-5: Equal Housing Opportunities — Promote equal housing opportunities for all residents, including Sunnyvale’s special needs populations, so that residents can reside in the housing of their choice.

Policy HE-5.2: Implement City ordinances regarding prohibition of discrimination in housing.

Policy HE-5.4: Continue to address the special needs of persons with disabilities through provision of supportive housing, accessibility grants, and development of procedures for reasonable accommodation.

City of Redwood City. The Redwood City General Plan (adopted October 11, 2010) (City of Redwood City 2010) does not provide relevant goals or policies associated with environmental justice.

City of East Palo Alto. The Economic Development Element of the City of East Palo Alto General Plan (City of East Palo Alto 1999) provides the following policy pertaining to environmental justice:

Policy 3: The City shall actively encourage the development of new housing and rehabilitation of existing units which shall be affordable to very low and low income households based on East Palo Alto levels of affordability. Additionally, all residents displaced by a redevelopment project shall be given the opportunity to live within City boundaries in housing they can afford.

3.10.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

For the purposes of this Final EIS/R, the project would have a significant impact if it would result in the following:

- Displace, relocate, or increase area businesses because of the expected increase in recreational users;
- Change lifestyles and social interactions;
- Disproportionately affect minority communities or low-income communities;

- Change the ethnic or racial composition in the community; or
- Change local employment opportunities or community tax bases.

The significance criteria identified above are established based on EO 12898 and the Environmental Impact Checklist for some of the More Common Social Concerns in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Reference Handbook (USFWS. 2007). Because CEQA does not identify social and economic effects as significant, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations were used to determine potential effects. The Phase 2 SBSP Restoration Project would not substantially affect local employment opportunities or change the community tax base. Therefore, this significance criterion is not discussed below.

Program-Level Evaluation Summary

The 2007 EIS/R assessed the impact of the three program-level alternatives. In all of these alternatives, the assessment showed that no construction or demolition of any facilities that would change the community tax base would occur. That document also stated that Programmatic Alternative A would not affect local employment opportunities but that there may be minor increases in local employment opportunities associated with management of the tidal habitat/ponds and new recreational facilities under Programmatic Alternatives B and C. However, the creation of additional jobs at USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) (now the California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW]) (the managing agencies), if any, would not substantially affect local employment opportunities.

As explained in Section 3.1.2, although both the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing NEPA and the CEQA Guidelines were considered during the impact analysis, impacts identified in this Final EIS/R are characterized using CEQA terminology, but NEPA regulations were used to determine potential effects. Please refer to Section 3.1.2 for a description of the terminology used to explain the severity of the impacts.

Project-Level Evaluation

Phase 2 Impact 3.10-1: Displace, relocate, or increase area businesses, particularly those associated with the expected increase in recreational users.

Alviso-Island Ponds, Alviso-Mountain View Ponds, Alviso-A8 Ponds, and Ravenswood Ponds—Alternatives A (No Action)

Under Alternatives Island A, Mountain View A, A8 A, and Ravenswood A, no new activities would occur as part of Phase 2. These are the No Action Alternatives for each of these pond clusters.¹ The pond clusters would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) and in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation activities would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not be expected to change business conditions in the long term. Therefore, no impact to area businesses would occur, and there would be few, if any, substantial changes in the local employment opportunities or community tax bases.

No Action Alternatives Level of Significance: No Impacts

¹ “No Action Alternative” is the NEPA term. It corresponds to CEQA’s “No Project Alternative” term. This Final EIS/R uses No Action throughout.

Action Alternatives

The Action Alternatives for Phase 2 are Alternatives Island B, Island C, Mountain View B, Mountain View C, A8 B, Ravenswood B, Ravenswood C, and Ravenswood D. These alternatives propose the construction of a range of new recreational and public access facilities at two of these pond clusters. The exceptions are the Alviso-Island pond cluster and the A8 pond cluster, where no changes to public access are proposed. As such, the Phase 2 Action Alternatives (Alternatives Island B, Island C, and A8 B) would have no effect on recreational use and thus no impacts on area businesses associated with recreational use. The remainder of this section addresses the Action Alternatives at the Mountain View and Ravenswood Ponds.

The construction of Phase 2 actions would result in some new recreation facilities. An increase in the number of recreational and public access facilities as a result of the Action Alternatives could—in conjunction with the currently existing uses—incrementally increase activity at businesses associated with recreational users. These facilities would be primarily an extension of existing services (e.g., viewing platforms, interpretative stations, and some new trails) and would not be expected to substantially increase the recreational uses of the facilities. (Estimates of the numbers of new users are presented in Section 3.6, Recreation Resources and the associated technical appendix.) Business activity at surrounding businesses that cater to these recreational users could be expected to increase slightly, and there could be minor associated increases in local employment opportunities or community tax bases. Therefore, the effects of Phase 2 on local business would be beneficial under NEPA and Less than Significant under CEQA.

Action Alternatives Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Phase 2 Impact 3.10-2: Change lifestyles and social interactions.

Alviso-Island Ponds, Alviso-Mountain View Ponds, Alviso-A8 Ponds, and Ravenswood Ponds—Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternatives Island A, Mountain View A, A8 A, and Ravenswood A, no new activities would occur as part of Phase 2. These pond clusters would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and in accordance with current USFWS practices. The local communities would experience no changes to their existing conditions. Therefore, no impacts to the current lifestyles and social interactions of the community would be expected.

No Action Alternatives Level of Significance: No Impact

Action Alternatives

The Action Alternatives for Phase 2 are Island B, Island C, Mountain View B, Mountain View C, A8 B, Ravenswood B, Ravenswood C, and Ravenswood D. These alternatives propose the construction of a range of new recreational and public access facilities at two of these pond clusters. The exceptions are the Alviso-Island pond cluster and the Alviso-A8 pond cluster, where no changes to public access are proposed and where the Phase 2 Action Alternatives (Alternatives Island B, Island C, and A8 B) would have no effect on the local communities. The proposed recreation and public access features in Phase 2 could have a small but beneficial effect on the lifestyles and social interactions of the communities surrounding the ponds. With more access to outdoor activities, the effects of this increase in opportunities for recreation would be beneficial.

Action Alternatives Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Phase 2 Impact 3.10-3: Effects disproportionately placed on densely populated minority and low-income communities or effects on the ethnic or racial composition in a community.

Alviso-Island Ponds, Alviso-Mountain View Ponds, Alviso-A8 Ponds, and Ravenswood Ponds—Alternative A (No Action)

Under Alternatives Island A, Mountain View A, A8 A, and Ravenswood A, no new activities would occur as part of Phase 2. These pond clusters would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and in accordance with current USFWS practices. The communities would remain similar to existing conditions.

Impacts related to flooding, as discussed in Section 3.2, Hydrology, would be Potentially Significant under the No Action Alternatives. Of the four pond clusters, the Alviso-Island pond cluster has both a minority and a low-income population and the Ravenswood pond cluster has a low-income population. Although there are minority and low-income populations in the areas around the Phase 2 pond clusters, not all areas impacted are classified as minority or low-income. Therefore, no disproportionate effects to minority or low-income communities would be expected.

No Action Alternatives Level of Significance: No Disproportionate Effect (NEPA only)

Action Alternatives

The Action Alternatives for Phase 2 are Alternatives Island B, Island C, Mountain View B, Mountain View C, A8 B, Ravenswood B, Ravenswood C, and Ravenswood D. These alternatives propose the construction of a range of new recreational and public access facilities at two of the pond clusters. These actions would involve earthmoving activities at each pond cluster that may cause short-term construction disturbance impacts (e.g., noise from construction equipment, increase in dust and truck traffic). These actions would also occur at some distance from residents and be similarly experienced by non-residents in the business parks and on public roads and trails. Users of these facilities are drawn from the general population. Activities would also not occur exclusively in areas where the minority population is a greater percentage than that of the surrounding cities' populations.

Construction activities would be temporary in nature for all four pond clusters. Due to the temporary nature of construction activities in the pond clusters and because these activities are not occurring in exclusively minority and low-income areas, the action alternatives would not disproportionately affect minority or low-income communities.

Action Alternatives Level of Significance: No Disproportionate Effect (NEPA)

Impact Summary

Phase 2 impacts and levels of significance are summarized in Table 3.10-5. The levels of significance are those remaining after implementation of program-level mitigation measures, project-level design features, the AMP and other Refuge management documents and practices. The socioeconomics and environmental justice analysis required no project-level mitigation measures to reduce the impacts to a level that was Less than Significant.

Table 3.10-5 Phase 2 Summary of Impacts: Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

IMPACT	ALTERNATIVE											
	ISLAND			MOUNTAIN VIEW			A8		RAVENSWOOD			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	A	B	C	D
Phase 2 Impact 3.10-1: Displace, relocate, or increase area businesses, particularly those associated with the expected increase in recreational users.	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	LTS/ B
Phase 2 Impact 3.10-2: Change lifestyles and social interactions.	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	LTS/ B
Phase 2 Impact 3.10-3: Effects disproportionately placed on densely populated minority and low-income communities or effects or racial composition in a community.	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE	NDE
<p>Notes:</p> <p>Alternative A at each pond cluster is the No Action Alternative (No Project Alternative under CEQA).</p> <p>B = Beneficial (NEPA only)</p> <p>LTS = Less than Significant</p> <p>NDE = No Disproportionate Effect</p> <p>NI = No Impact</p>												

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