

3.6 Recreation Resources

This section of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (referred to throughout as the Final EIS/R) describes the existing recreational resources within the Phase 2 project area and analyzes whether the project implementation would cause a substantial adverse effect on recreational resources. The information presented is based on a review of existing recreational resources within the area and other pertinent federal, state and local regulations. The analysis of the project's impacts on recreational resources is presented for each alternative. The program-level mitigation measures described in Chapter 2, Alternatives, would be implemented as part of this project. Therefore, this section only includes additional mitigation measures as needed.

Appendix F, Recreation Resources, contains a detailed discussion of recreation resources for the Phase 2 project area of the South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project and provides information on the following topics:

- Regulatory Framework;
- Existing Recreation and Public Access Facilities;
- Recreation Regulatory Permit Requirements;
- Phase 2 Public Access and Recreation Alternatives;
- Projected Trail Use; and
- Recreation and Public Access Design Guidelines.

3.6.1 Physical Setting

Methodology

The development of the baseline conditions, significance criteria, and impact analysis in this section is commensurate to and reliant on the analysis conducted in the 2007 South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement/Report (2007 EIS/R). The baseline condition specific to the Phase 2 area pond clusters is based on the current condition of these areas.

Regional Setting

The Phase 2 project area includes the four pond clusters. Three of these pond clusters are located in the Alviso pond complex, and the fourth is located in the Ravenswood pond complex.

With the exception of Charleston Slough, which is owned by the City of Mountain View, all of these ponds are owned and managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

Project Setting

Existing recreation and public access facilities in and near the project area – as well as facilities proposed by projects or general, master, or recreation plans other than the SBSP Restoration Project – are shown on Figure 3.6-1 and described in Tables 3.6-1 through 3.6-4. These lists are not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive of every public access opportunity or recreational resource, but they are intended to give a sense of the existing conditions regarding recreation and public access in the vicinity of each of the pond clusters.

3.6.2 Regulatory Setting

This section provides a summary of the regulatory framework for the area of the SBSP Restoration Project.

Regulatory and Managerial Framework

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The Alviso and Ravenswood pond complexes are owned and managed by the USFWS as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. These pond complexes are governed by laws, executive orders, and directives that guide public use and recreation on National Wildlife Refuges. The National Wildlife Refuge System, which was established for the American public to develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife, identifies six wildlife-dependent recreational uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Bay Conservation and Development Commission

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has jurisdiction relative to recreation and public access over the Phase 2 area of the SBSP Restoration Project. The McAteer-Petris Act (California Government Code 66600 – 66682) is the key legal provision under California state law that preserves San Francisco Bay from indiscriminate filling. BCDC administers the *San Francisco Bay Plan* for the long-term use of the Bay, reviews applications for projects that fall within BCDC jurisdiction for their ability to provide “maximum feasible public access.” BCDC requires locations for water-oriented land uses and increased public access to shoreline and waters, and encourages the provision of maximum feasible public access to the Bay and its shoreline as long as such access is compatible with wildlife protection. The *San Francisco Bay Plan* also contains policies that encourage the development of waterfront recreation facilities and linkages between existing shoreline parks, and requires the provision of these opportunities in relationship to sensitive biological species, habitats, and future restoration of salt ponds.

The jurisdiction of these two agencies composes the primary legal and managerial framework with which to plan and manage existing and proposed recreation and public access for the area of the SBSP Restoration Project.

The cities of Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Menlo Park own adjacent recreation facilities that connect directly to trails and recreation facilities that would be constructed as part of the project. In addition, there are several trail studies and master plans in and around the SBSP project area that contain policies and recommendations for recreation and public access facilities.



Table 3.6-1 Alviso–Island Ponds Existing Public Access and Recreation

RECREATIONAL FEATURES	NEARBY LOCATIONS
Trails	Bay Trail Spine The nearest segment of the Bay Trail is approximately 0.5 mile east of Pond A19, constructed as part of Bayside Business Park, or approximately 1 mile north at Auto Mall Parkway.
Boating	Bay and its tributaries Access is not restricted in waterways around the Phase 2 ponds, but boating within the ponds is restricted to hunting (see below).
Access Points and Staging Areas	Bayside Business Park There are two trailheads nearby, but no land access to the Alviso-Island pond cluster (Island Ponds).
Waterfowl Hunting	Hunting by boat is allowed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pond A19 is open for hunting 7 days a week during the fall and winter waterfowl hunting season. ▪ Access to Pond A19 is by boat only. Boats must access Pond A19 from the Bay and hunting is only allowed from the boat inside the pond. ▪ Shooting from levees is prohibited. ▪ Ponds A20 and 21 are not open for hunting.
Dog Use	Dogs are allowed in hunting areas during waterfowl hunting season, with a Special Use Permit.
Fishing	Fishing by boat is allowed in the Bay and sloughs only. Fishing is prohibited in all Refuge ponds and from levees.
Environmental Education Center at the Refuge	Docent-led tours and interpretive displays at the Environmental Education Center (EEC) at the Refuge provide an overview of the Island Ponds from trails at Ponds A16 and A17, south of Coyote Creek. No physical access to the area is allowed.

Table 3.6-2 Alviso–A8 Ponds Existing Public Access and Recreation

RECREATIONAL FEATURES	NEARBY LOCATIONS
Trails	<p>Access to levee roads is currently allowed for driving vehicles, walking, or bicycling associated with hunting.</p> <p>There is a 9-mile loop trail accessed from the Alviso Marina County Park around Alviso pond complex Ponds A9 –A14.</p> <p>Bay Trail Spine</p> <p>Planned Bay Trail segment is located at the southeast corner of Pond A8S. Existing Bay Trail spine is located south of Pond A8S on the south side of Guadalupe Slough, adjacent to Sunnyvale Baylands Park.</p> <p>Guadalupe River Trail</p> <p>This trail, which is east of the project site, is planned to connect to the Bay Trail at Alviso Marina County Park.</p>
Boating	<p>Bay and Its Tributaries</p> <p>Access is not restricted in waterways around the Phase 2 ponds, but boating is not permitted within the ponds except during hunting season and with a permit</p> <p>Alviso Marina County Park (Santa Clara County Parks)</p> <p>A boat launch, marina, and a Bay Area Water Trail access point are nearby.</p>
Parks	<p>Alviso Marina County Park (Santa Clara County Parks)</p> <p>Recreation activities include hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and picnicking. Dogs are allowed in the County Park's pathways and picnic areas, but are not allowed on the trails, levees, and boardwalks.</p> <p>A boat launch provides access to San Francisco Bay for motorized and non-motorized watercraft. The site is a designated access point for the Bay Area Water Trail.</p> <p>Baylands Park (City of Sunnyvale)</p> <p>Active recreation resources include hiking, bicycling, amphitheater, picnicking, group facilities, and four playground areas. Pets are not allowed within the park.</p>
Access Points and Staging Areas	Gold Street gate provides access to ponds and levees for waterfowl hunting only.
Viewing Platforms	Wildlife observation areas, platforms, boardwalks, and benches are located at the EEC, Alviso Marina County Park, and Baylands Park.
Waterfowl Hunting	<p>Pond A8 is open to waterfowl hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the fall and winter waterfowl hunting season. Access to ponds by hunters with a permit is allowed from Gold Street in Alviso. Hunters must maintain a minimum distance of 300 feet from adjacent hunters when hunting on the levees. Hunting from boats is allowed.</p> <p>Motorized vehicles on levees are not allowed.</p>
Dog Use	Dogs are allowed in hunting areas during waterfowl hunting season, with a Special Use Permit.
Fishing	Fishing is allowed by boat in the Bay and sloughs only. Fishing is prohibited in all Refuge ponds and from levees.
Environmental Education Center at the Refuge	Docent-led tours and interpretive displays are located at the EEC, approximately 0.5 mile east of Pond A8.

Table 3.6-3 Alviso–Mountain View Ponds Existing Public Access and Recreation

RECREATIONAL FEATURES	NEARBY LOCATIONS
Trails	Bay Trail Spine The Bay Trail spine is in Mountain View's Shoreline Park, south of Pond A1 and Pond A2W, west and south of Charleston Slough.
	Adobe Creek Loop Trail (Bay Trail) The Bay Trail is located west of Charleston Slough, in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve.
	Stevens Creek Trail The trail is located between Ponds A2W and A2E, on the east levee of Stevens Creek.
	Mountain View Shoreline Park The park has 8 miles of paved trails.
Access Points and Staging Areas	Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve (west of the pond cluster)
	San Antonio Road/Terminal Boulevard (parking, restrooms, and trailhead)
	Shoreline Park, Mountain View (south of the pond cluster)
Boating	Bay and its tributaries Access is not restricted in waterways around the Phase 2 ponds, but boating is not permitted within the ponds.
	Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve Non-motorized, hand-launched watercraft are allowed. There is a Bay Area Water Trail access point.
	Mountain View Shoreline Park A 50-acre sailing lake is located within Shoreline Park, with non-motorized watercraft rental and lessons, windsurfing, and other facilities
Waterfowl Hunting	Per USFWS Hunting Regulations, Ponds A2E and AB1, east of the project area, are open to waterfowl hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the fall and winter waterfowl hunting season; a Refuge Special Use Permit is required. Ponds A1 and A2W are not open for hunting.
Dog Use	USFWS Refuge Lands Dogs are allowed in hunting areas during waterfowl hunting season, with a Special Use Permit
	Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve Dogs are allowed on leash.
	Mountain View Shoreline Park Dogs not allowed within the park. There is an adjacent dog park outside Shoreline Park's limits.
Fishing	Fishing is allowed by boat in the Bay and sloughs only. Fishing is prohibited in all Refuge ponds and from levees.
Palo Alto Baylands Park and Nature Preserve	The park offers docent-led tours, interpretive displays, environmental education field trips, hands-on activities, classroom presentations, and other outreach.
Mountain View Shoreline Park	The park offers docent-led tours focusing on the environment, interpretive displays, a Junior Ranger program, sailing, and watercraft activities. The park has an 18-hole golf course, a clubhouse, and banquet facilities. The historic Rengstorff House is located in the park, and there are areas for jogging, walking, bird watching, and kite flying.
Viewing Platforms	Wildlife observation areas, platforms, and benches are located along the site perimeter at the south end of Charleston Slough, in Palo Alto Baylands Park and Nature Preserve and Shoreline Park

Table 3.6-4 Ravenswood Ponds Existing Public Access and Recreation

RECREATIONAL FEATURES	NEARBY LOCATIONS
Trails	Bay Trail Spine The Bay Trail spine extends along State Route (SR) 84/Bayfront Expressway and the south borders of Ponds R3 and S5 and continues between Ponds R2 and SF2 and onto the Dumbarton Bridge.
	Ravenswood Trail Hiking is allowed on this unimproved trail around Ponds R1 and R2, east of the Phase 2 site.
	Phase 1 Bay Trail Spur This trail lies east of the Phase 2 site, along the eastern edge of Pond SF2.
	Bedwell Bayfront Park Trail A loop trail winds around the perimeter of the park, adjacent to Ponds R4, R5, and S5. Other trails are located within the park.
	Facebook Loop Trail This trail is a paved public shoreline trail southeast of Pond R3.
Boating	No boating is allowed.
Access Points and Staging Areas	An access road and parking areas are located at the Marsh Road entrance to Bedwell Bayfront Park and further into the park on the western side, near the restrooms
Waterfowl Hunting	At Greco Island (adjacent to Pond R4), waterfowl hunting by boat only is allowed 7 days a week. No land or tidal access is allowed. At Ponds R1 and R2, waterfowl hunting is allowed seven days a week, only from the existing levees. Access to ponds is by foot or bicycle from either of two trailheads off SR 84. Hunting is prohibited within 300 feet of SR 84 and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) substation.
Dog Use	Bedwell Bayfront Park Dogs are allowed on leash.
	USFWS Refuge Lands Dogs are allowed in hunting areas during waterfowl hunting season, with a Special Use Permit.
Fishing	Fishing is allowed by boat in the Bay and sloughs only. Fishing is prohibited in all Refuge ponds and from levees.
Interpretive Exhibits and Viewing Platforms	Exhibits are located in the parking area at the entrance to Bedwell Bayfront Park on Marsh Road, at a viewing point at the top of the hill near the northeast corner of the park, and along the Pond SF2 Trail.

Association of Bay Area Governments Bay Trail

The Bay Trail (www.baytrail.org) is a planned, continuous 500-mile bicycling and hiking path around San Francisco Bay. When complete, the trail will pass through 47 cities and all 9 Bay Area counties, and will cross 7 toll bridges. To date, more than two-thirds of the length of the Bay Trail alignment has been developed. In reaching this significant milestone, there is increased interest in closing the remaining gaps in the trail system. Although not a regulatory agency, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Bay Trail has an interest in the project as a partner and potential funding source, but each segment of the Bay Trail has a local “owner” agency that develops and operates the trail segments within its own jurisdiction. The Bay Trail Plan has been prepared in consultation with local governments, and is

periodically amended and updated in consultation with them. BCDC considers the Bay Trail Plan in making determinations as to whether a project is consistent with their policies on public access.

Segments of the Bay Trail are located adjacent to the project area, and facilities associated with the Bay Area Water Trail and overseen by the State Coastal Conservancy are located nearby. Many of the public access facilities constructed as part of Phase 2 of the project could connect to these existing trail segments. New trail segments being considered as part of Phase 2 actions are not currently shown as planned segments of the Bay Trail but could be considered as part of the Bay Trail network in the future.

Recreation-related plans and policies of federal, state, and local agencies are described in Appendix F.

Recreation-Related Review and Permits

Proposed recreation components may be subject to various federal and state regulations that would require approvals, permits, and/or consistency determinations for the proposed recreation and public access development.

BCDC will review and – under regulatory authority – approve permits for public access and recreation facilities within the project area. BCDC permit overview requirements are described in Appendix F.

Depending on the location of the proposed public access and recreation facilities, the USFWS may be exempt from the permit requirements of other regional and local jurisdictions. However, because the lead agencies may partner with regional or local groups (e.g., regional park districts, counties, and cities) to execute specific recreation-related project components, plan reviews, agreements, and/or permits may be needed or required. Agencies that may have review and/or permit requirements over proposed recreational components include the planning, recreation, park district, public works, and/or flood control departments of the municipalities where the project components occur.

Table 3.6-5 provides a summary of the types of permits or agreements that may be required to carry out specific construction or maintenance activities associated with the recreation and public access development.

Table 3.6-5 Recreation-Related Regulations and Permit Summary

ADMINISTERING AGENCIES	DESIGN REVIEW/AGREEMENT/PERMIT	REGULATION
USFWS	Provides Compatibility Determination (Priority Uses).	National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act
	Provides Programmatic Consultation to create the Biological Opinion.	Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 and 9
	Requires Habitat Conservation Plan (including “take permit,” no-surprises clause, safe harbors, and yet-to-be listed species protection for landowner).	Federal Endangered Species Act Section 10
	Issues “no effect” or “not likely to affect” letter.	Consultation with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 7
	Protects against destruction of migratory bird nests and possession of migratory bird “parts.”	Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Table 3.6-5 Recreation-Related Regulations and Permit Summary

ADMINISTERING AGENCIES	DESIGN REVIEW/AGREEMENT/PERMIT	REGULATION
CDFW	California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (wetland/riparian mitigation and monitoring plans).	California Environmental Quality Act
	Issues streambed alteration permit required for any modification of a streambed or bank.	California Fish and Game Code Section 1600
	Provides State Management Agreement (Take Permit) for state-listed species.	California Endangered Species Act
	Protects native resident and migratory bird eggs and nests.	California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5
BCDC	Conducts reviews for filling, dredging, substantial change in use, or development activities at the salt ponds or managed wetland areas, including recreation-related projects.	McAteer-Petris Act, Coastal Zone Management Act
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board	Issues water quality certification as part of USACE permit.	Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Issues Nationwide or Individual Permit to perform dredge or fill activities in the Waters of the U.S., including wetlands.	Section 404 of Federal Clean Water Act, Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act
	Issues permit to create obstructions or fill of navigable waters of the U.S.	Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899

3.6.3 Proposed Recreation and Public Access Facilities

The Phase 2 action alternatives propose restoration, flood management, and recreation/public access activities at two of the separate pond clusters included in Phase 2: the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster (also referred to as the Mountain View Ponds) and the Ravenswood pond cluster (also referred to as the Ravenswood Ponds). Actions at these pond clusters are independent of any activity at the other clusters and essentially constitute stand-alone projects. There are no recreation/public access features planned or proposed under Phase 2 at the Island Ponds or A8 Ponds. Each action alternative differs in the provision of recreation and public access features, while the No Action Alternative maintains the existing facilities with no new facilities. The Island Ponds and A8 Ponds do not currently provide recreation or public access facilities other than waterfowl hunting under a Refuge-issued permit).

For the Mountain View Ponds and Ravenswood Ponds, recreation and public access features are proposed to supplement the existing trail network and recreational/public access experience in adjacent park areas. The proposed features include spur trails and viewing platforms that connect with the existing trail system. These trail connections would provide closer access to the Bay, its shoreline, and adjacent restored areas that would not be possible without the project. These positive impacts of the project would provide considerable benefits to a large, urbanized group of recreational and research-based visitors. While no recreation or public access facilities are proposed for the Island Ponds or the A8 Ponds under Phase 2, this does not preclude future public access or recreation facilities from being included in future project phases.

Alviso-Island Pond Cluster

The Alviso-Island pond cluster (also referred to as the Island Ponds) consists of Ponds A19, A20, and A21; the levees surrounding each pond; and some of the fringe marsh outside of these levees, including the narrow marsh between Ponds A19 and A20. Pond A19 is available for hunting by boat only, by special permit.

Under Alternatives Island A, Island B, and Island C, there would be no new public access or recreation improvements to these ponds. Hunting would continue under current regulations. Both hunting and fishing recreational opportunities have benefitted from habitat restoration at the Island Ponds in Phase 1 due to the increase in waterfowl and fish utilizing these areas. There is no projected change in recreational use as a result of any of these alternatives.

Alviso-Mountain View Pond Cluster

The Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster (also referred to as the Mountain View Ponds) consists of Pond A1, Pond A2W, the levees surrounding each pond, some of the fringe marsh outside of the pond and slough levees, Permanente Creek, and Mountain View Slough. For the purposes of Phase 2 planning and in this EIS/R, Charleston Slough, which is owned by the City of Mountain View, is considered part of the Mountain View Ponds, as are the northern, western, and southern levees and the water control structure surrounding it. The western levee border of Charleston Slough is owned by the City of Palo Alto; the other levees are City of Mountain View property.

Existing recreation and public access facilities in the general area include the Palo Alto segment of the Bay Trail, the Mountain View segment of the Bay Trail, restrooms and trailhead access facilities at San Antonio/Terminal Road, a viewing platform at the south end of Charleston Slough, and other local trails and recreational facilities in Shoreline Park. These facilities would remain unchanged but would be temporarily closed or relocated during construction, or rebuilt, depending on the project alternative. None of these facilities would be permanently removed.

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action)

Under Alternative Mountain View A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing trails on many of the levees along the boundary of the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster would continue to be maintained. There would be no projected increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative.

Alternative Mountain View B

A new trail, viewing platform, and interpretative platform would be installed to improve recreation and public access facilities at the Mountain View Ponds. A 700-foot-long spur trail would be constructed along the improved western levee of Pond A1 (adjacent to Charleston Slough) to a viewing platform. Wildlife viewing opportunities from the trails along the southern shore of Pond A1 would be improved. The trail design would account for landfill cells below and behind the trail, and the trail would be designed to avoid these landfill cells. A new viewing platform would be constructed along the existing Bay Trail near the southeast corner of Pond A1 at Permanente Creek.

Levee crests destined for trail access would be finished with a 4-inch-thick layer of crushed gravel to provide all-weather access and to be compliant with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on federal

lands and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) where the trails are part of the Bay Trail system or where project partners (e.g., state, county, or city agency) have compliance obligations.

Areas adjacent to this pond cluster are already in use, primarily by hikers and bicyclists. The project would provide new recreational facilities and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of project actions is 50 to 60 additional users per day during peak periods of use.

Alternative Mountain View C

Under Alternative Mountain View C, approximately 9,600 feet of new trails, four viewing platforms and a 700-foot boardwalk would be installed to improve recreation and public access at the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster. A viewing platform would be constructed along the existing trail on the southern border of Pond A1 near the eastern end of the pond. The landward side of the Pond A1 breach would be armored to prevent the levee beneath the trail and viewing platform from being scoured away. As part of restoration and flood control actions, the existing trail along the improved, raised western and southern levees of Charleston Slough would be rebuilt, a viewing platform would be added along the southern trail on Pond A1, a spur trail and viewing platform would be constructed at the northern end of Charleston Slough. A trail along the levee on the east and north sides of Pond A2W, extending to the end of the PG&E access road (including a bridge over breaches on this levee), and a trail and viewing platform on the improved levee would also be constructed. These features would improve wildlife and habitat viewing opportunities.

Levee crests destined for trail access would be finished with a 4-inch-thick layer of crushed gravel to provide all-weather access and to be compliant with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on federal lands and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) where the trails are part of the Bay Trail system or where project partners (e.g., state, county, or city agency) have compliance obligations.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative is 100 to 150 additional users per day during peak use periods. New trail spurs and viewing platforms are dispersed throughout the project area.

Alviso-A8 Pond Cluster

The Alviso-A8 pond cluster (also referred to as the A8 Ponds) consists of Ponds A8 and A8S and the levees surrounding each pond. This pond cluster is located in the southern portion of the 25-pond Alviso pond complex. Except for waterfowl hunting by Refuge permit, no other public access or recreation is currently provided at these ponds. The Bay Trail spine passes nearby, across San Tomas Aquino Creek to the south.

Alternative A8 A (No Action)

Under Alternative A8 A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. The Bay Trail spine to the south of these ponds would be unaffected. There is no projected increase in recreation use as a result of project actions.

Alternative A8 B

Under Alternative A8 B, habitat transition zones would be constructed in the southern corners of Pond A8S to add habitat complexity and to buffer the neighboring landfill against future damage from a sea level rise or intrusion. No public access or recreation additions or improvements are proposed. There is no projected increase in recreation use as a result of project actions.

Ravenswood Ponds

The Phase 2 Ravenswood pond cluster consists of Ponds R3, R4, R5, and S5; the levees surrounding each pond; some of the fringe marsh outside of these levees; and the All-American Canal (AAC). Existing trails, trailheads, access points and viewing platforms in Bedwell Bayfront Park, along SR 84, and surrounding areas are not within the project area and would remain unchanged; however, some existing trail facilities may be subject to temporary closure or relocation during project construction.

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action)

Under Alternative Ravenswood A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing trails at adjacent Bedwell Bayfront Park, owned by the City of Menlo Park, and the existing Bay Trail along SR 84 would continue to be used and separately maintained.

Alternative Ravenswood B

Under Alternative Ravenswood B, a viewing platform would be constructed on or adjacent to an existing trail near Ponds R5 and S5 to improve the public access available at the adjacent wildlife habitat in the area of Ponds R5 and S5. By incorporating viewing platforms at these ponds, this action would enhance the public's recreational experiences at the relatively high-use Bedwell Bayfront Park in Menlo Park. No new trails would be constructed under this alternative.

The project would provide some new recreational facilities, with 50 to 60 additional users per day projected during peak use.

Alternative Ravenswood C

A 2,700-foot-long improved trail along the eastern levees of Ponds R5 and S5 would be constructed and linked to the existing trails outside of these ponds. This trail would require improvements to the berm-like levees between R4 and R5, between R3 and R5, and between R3 and S5 to raise the trail elevation and provide sufficient width (minimum 8 feet) for a two way trail. Many of these levee improvements would be made regardless of the trail because of the need to prevent uncontrolled tidal flows into Ponds R5 and S5. This alternative would include 1,500 feet of trail on improved levee to meet needs associated with excluding tidal flows, as well as 1,200 feet of trail on existing levees improved to provide adequate width and level trail surface to meet state and federal accessibility guidelines. The proposed water control structures between R4 and R5 and between R3 and S5 would need to be set low enough to allow the trail to be constructed on top of them. Also, this trail would necessitate a break in the fence along the southern border of Ponds R5 and S5 where it leaves the Refuge and connects to the Bay Trail.

A viewing platform near Ponds R5 and S5 would be constructed on or adjacent to an existing trail to improve the public access available at the adjacent wildlife habitat in Ponds R5 and S5. By incorporating viewing platforms at these ponds, this action would enhance the public's recreational experiences at the relatively high-use Bedwell Bayfront Park in Menlo Park.

A 1,200 foot spur trail and viewing platform would be constructed along the northwestern corner of Pond R4. The trail would begin at the northeast corner of the Bedwell Bayfront Park and extend to the northeast along a boardwalk above the lowered and breached levee. A new viewing platform would be constructed at the northern terminus of the trail.

Levee crests destined for trail access would be finished with a 4-inch-thick layer of crushed gravel to provide all-weather access and to be compliant with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on federal lands and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) where the trails are part of the Bay Trail system or where project partners (e.g., state, county, or city agency) have compliance obligations.

The project would provide new recreational facilities, with 100 to 150 additional users per day projected during peak use. A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 would provide an additional access opportunity.

Alternative Ravenswood D

A 2,700-foot trail would be constructed along the eastern levees of Ponds R5 and S5 and linked to the existing trails located on the outer levees of these ponds to form a loop around these ponds. Levee improvements would be completed to allow a minimum 8-foot-wide accessible trail, and the levees would be elevated as needed to address projected sea level rise. The proposed water control structures between Ponds R4 and R5 and between Ponds R3 and S5 would need to be set low enough to allow the trail to be constructed on top of them. This trail would also necessitate a break in the fence along the southern border of R5 and S5 where it leaves the Refuge and connects to the Bay Trail.

A viewing platform would be constructed on or adjacent to an existing trail near Ponds R5 and S5 to improve the public access available at the adjacent wildlife habitat in the ponds. By incorporating viewing platforms at these ponds, this action would enhance the public's recreational experiences at the relatively high-use Bedwell Bayfront Park in Menlo Park.

A 1,200-foot spur trail and viewing platform would be constructed on the existing levee along the northwestern corner of Pond R4. The trail would begin at the corner of Bedwell Bayfront Park and extend to the northeast along the existing levee, which would be improved as needed for restoration and sea level rise projections.

Levee crests destined for trail access would be finished with a 4-inch-thick layer of crushed gravel to provide all-weather access and to be compliant with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on federal lands and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) where the trails are part of the Bay Trail system or where project partners (e.g., state, county, or city agency) have compliance obligations.

The project would provide new recreational facilities, with 100 to 150 additional users per day projected during peak use. A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 would provide an additional access opportunity.

3.6.4 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

For the purposes of this EIS/R, the project would cause a significant impact to recreational resources if it:

- Would not provide maximum feasible public access, consistent with the proposed project (per BCDC);
- Would not be consistent with regional and local laws and recreation plans including USFWS mission and regulatory requirements;
- Would not be consistent with existing recreational uses;
- Would substantially reduce recreational opportunities at existing facilities;
- Would substantially displace public recreation activities or opportunities and comparable recreation opportunities would not be available;
- Would cause an increase in the use of existing recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated; or
- Would include recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Under the No Action Alternative, no new recreation and public access facilities would be constructed and, in some instances, existing facilities such as trails that are on existing levees might not be maintained and would ultimately deteriorate and be eliminated. For each significance criterion listed above that would be triggered by the SBSP Restoration Project, a discussion is presented below. Beneficial impacts (as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of the project are also identified.

Impact evaluations for the Action Alternatives are evaluated based on the existing conditions described in Section 3.6.3 above, and not the proposed conditions that would occur under the No Action Alternative. This approach is consistent with CEQA and NEPA protocols for analyzing project impacts. In this case, the No Action Alternative represents the continuation of the current management direction or level of management intensity provided in the Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) and other Refuge operations practices into the future, with no change in that management.

As explained in Section 3.1.2, Environmental Setting and Impact Analysis, while both CEQA 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. Please refer to Section 3.1.2 for a description of the terminology used to explain the severity of the impacts.

A discussion of potential impacts for each pond cluster is presented below.

Program-Level Evaluation

The 2007 South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Programmatic EIS/R (2007 EIS/R) evaluated two potential recreation impacts of three long-term program-level alternatives. Programmatic Alternative A would be the No Action Alternative. Programmatic Alternative B would be a 50/50 mix of tidal marsh and enhanced managed ponds called the Managed Pond Emphasis. Programmatic Alternative C would be

a mix of 90 percent tidal marsh/10 percent managed pond called the Tidal Marsh Emphasis. The determination was made in the 2007 EIS/R that under the implementation of Programmatic Alternative C, there would be a less-than-significant impact to most recreation resources. Under CEQA, the alternative would result in less-than-significant impacts on the provision of new public access and recreation facilities, including the opening of new areas for recreational purposes and completion of the Bay Trail spine.

Under NEPA, the alternative would result in beneficial impacts. For Programmatic Alternative C, the impact was determined to be potentially significant on permanent removal of existing recreational features (trails) because of a reduction in the amount of miles of land trails relative to Alternatives A and B; however, the addition of non-motorized boat access to Ravenswood Slough, with a connection to the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail via this access, would provide a key link in the overall South Bay water trail access points. Also, the addition of new viewing platforms would increase the wildlife viewing opportunities over what currently exists at the Ravenswood pond complex.

Public Access and Impacts to Wildlife

A central theme to developing and implementing the overall SBSP project has been the concept of "Adaptive Management." Under an Adaptive Management approach, the outcomes of previous restoration efforts and ongoing management actions that have been implemented are analyzed, and the resulting information is utilized to modify management and develop new strategies to lessen impacts and achieve better restoration results. This approach is particularly effective with regards to potential impacts of trail use on wildlife, especially threatened and endangered species. The public access and wildlife compatibility studies conducted for the project have identified potential impacts from trail use in certain areas and on certain species, such as the endangered western snowy plover.

Alternatives B and C for Ravenswood Pond R3 and Alternative C for Alviso (in the Island Ponds) contained the following notation:

"Denotes trails that were identified during the alternatives development process as being of particular concern to permitting agencies for potential to disrupt habitat."

This means that the concerns of these agencies with respect to certain trails or recreational features may prevent the implementation of public access and recreation features that were represented conceptually in the 2007 EIS/R. Specific features in this category that are relevant to Phase 2 planning include the following:

- Pond R3 Loop Trail. Since Pond R3 currently provides habitat for nesting western snowy plovers, and is planned to continue to be a managed pond as part of Phase 2 actions, the Pond R3 loop trail has been eliminated in this phase. If a future action includes breaching Pond R3 to restore tidal action, then subsequent environmental analysis will be completed to evaluate the suitability of a spur trail and water trail access on the east side of Pond R3.
- Alviso-Island Pond Cluster – Ponds A20-21 Trail. The Alviso-Island pond cluster also provides endangered species habitat, and this trail was eliminated from implementation in this phase. In addition, completion of public access to these ponds would not provide a land connection to any other area. If future project actions include improvement of levees in adjacent areas, such as Ponds A17, A22 or A23, that could be considered to provide public access opportunities, then subsequent environmental analysis will be completed to evaluate the suitability of such trails.

Section 3.6, Biological Resources, of this EIS/R also discusses the issue of potential disturbance of wildlife associated with increased public access.

Other recreation impacts evaluated as part of program-level project planning and included in the 2007 EIS/R are outside the Phase 2 project area.

Project-Level Evaluation

Phase 2 Impact 3.6-1: Provision of new public access and recreation facilities, including the opening of new areas for recreational purposes and completion of the Bay Trail spine.

Alviso-Island Ponds

Alternative Island A (No Action). Under Alternative Island A, no new recreation activities would occur, and no new facilities would be provided in Phase 2. The Island Ponds would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and accordance with current USFWS practices. Existing recreation use (hunting) would continue similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Although no new public access is proposed, there is no current land-based trail adjacent to this area, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine; therefore there would be no impact.

Alternative Island A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island B. Under Alternative Island B, no new recreation activities would occur, and no new facilities would be provided in Phase 2. Existing recreation use (hunting) would continue similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Although no new public access is proposed, there is no current land-based trail adjacent to this area, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine. A restored tidal marsh would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities for the non-motorized boaters that do visit the waterways around the Island Ponds.

Alternative Island B Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alternative Island C. Under Alternative Island C, no new recreation activities would occur, and no new facilities would be provided in Phase 2. Existing recreation use (hunting) would continue similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Although no new public access is proposed, there is no current land-based trail adjacent to this area, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine. A restored tidal marsh would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities for the non-motorized boaters that do visit the waterways around the Island Ponds.

Alternative Island C Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alviso-Mountain View Ponds

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action). Under Alternative Mountain View A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing vehicular access to the PG&E facilities on the east side of Pond A2W would continue, but would not be opened to the public. The existing Bay Trail spine on adjacent City of Mountain View and City of Palo Alto lands provides a complete segment in this area, and would continue to be managed by these cities.

This alternative would not be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access because no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided nor are any feasible. It should be noted, however, that public access as part of a future phase is not precluded.

Alternative Mountain View A: Potentially Significant

Alternative Mountain View B. Under Alternative Mountain View B, new public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational opportunities at the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster.

Existing vehicular access to the PG&E facilities on the east side of Pond A2W would continue to be maintained, but would not be publicly accessible. The existing Bay Trail spine on adjacent City of Mountain View and City of Palo Alto lands provides a complete segment in this area, and would continue to be managed by these cities.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing platforms, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities. Similarly, restored tidal marsh habitat would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities at the Mountain View Ponds.

Alternative Mountain View B would not be fully consistent with the BCDC policy to provide the maximum feasible public access; however, its public access and recreation components would move closer to that maximum level of access. This alternative would provide additional facilities that currently do not exist, but these facilities would not provide new public access to San Francisco Bay on the east Pond A2W levee, as described in the 2007 EIS/R. However, implementation of these proposed facilities would not preclude completion of additional public access facilities in a future phase.

Alternative Mountain View B Level of Significance: Potentially Significant

Alternative Mountain View C. Under Alternative Mountain View C, new public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster.

Existing vehicular access to the PG&E facilities on the east side of Pond A2W would continue to be maintained, and this levee would be improved with a publicly accessible trail. The existing Bay Trail spine on adjacent City of Mountain View and City of Palo Alto lands provides a complete segment in this area, and would continue to be managed by these cities.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing platforms, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities. Similarly, restored tidal marsh habitat would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities at the Mountain View Ponds.

Alternative Mountain View C would be fully consistent with the BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access. This alternative would provide additional facilities that currently do not exist, and would provide new public access to San Francisco Bay on the east A2W levee, as described in the 2007 EIS/R.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)***Alviso-A8 Ponds***

Alternative A8 A (No Action). Under Alternative A8 A, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided in Phase 2, and the pond cluster would continue to be monitored in accordance with current USFWS practices. Existing recreation use (hunting) would continue similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. No new public access is proposed, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail Spine.

Physical access is currently available to the levees along the south portion of Pond 8A to hunters only, by special permit. Lands south of this area are designated for a future Bay Trail loop as well as provision of a viewing platform or interpretive feature to be coordinated with the City of San Jose for implementation.

This alternative would not be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access because no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided. However, provision of a viewing platform or interpretive feature and public access as part of a future phase is not precluded, which would be contingent on the levees being opened to broader public access. Although no new public access is proposed, there is no current land-based trail adjacent to this area, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine. Thus there is no impact associated with failing to add maximum feasible public access.

Alternative A8 A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative A8 B. Under Alternative A8 B, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided in Phase 2, and the Alviso-A8 pond cluster would continue to be monitored in accordance with current USFWS practices. Existing recreation use (hunting) would continue similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. No new public access is proposed, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine. although the Bay Trail spine is already complete just to the south of the area.

Physical access is currently available to the levees along the south portion of Pond 8A to hunters only, by special permit. Lands south of this area are designated for a future Bay Trail loop, as well as provision of a viewing platform or interpretive feature to be coordinated with the City of San Jose for implementation.

This alternative would not be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access because no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided. However, provision of a viewing platform or interpretive feature and public access as part of a future phase is not precluded. This, however, would be contingent on the levees being opened to broader public access. Although no new public access is proposed, there is no current land-based trail adjacent to this area, and the project area does not contain the designated Bay Trail spine. Thus there is no impact associated with failing to add maximum feasible public access.

Alternative A8 B Level of Significance: No Impact***Ravenswood Ponds***

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action). Under Alternative Ravenswood A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing trails at adjacent Bedwell Bayfront Park, owned by the

City of Menlo Park, and the existing Bay Trail along SR 84 would continue to be used and maintained separately.

This alternative would not be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access because no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided, but public access as part of a future phase is not precluded.

Alternative Ravenswood A Level of Significance: Potentially Significant

Alternative Ravenswood B. Under Alternative Ravenswood B, there would be new recreational facilities, but no new public access trails that would increase recreational access to the Ravenswood pond cluster are proposed. In addition, restored tidal marsh and other habitats would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities at the Ravenswood Ponds.

Improved viewing facilities will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources, and their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative Ravenswood B would not be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access; however, its public access and recreation components would move closer to that maximum level of access. This alternative would provide additional facilities that currently do not exist, but would not provide new public access trails, as described in the 2007 EIS/R. However, implementation of these proposed facilities would not preclude completion of additional public access facilities in a future phase.

Alternative Ravenswood B Level of Significance: Potentially Significant

Alternative Ravenswood C. Under Alternative Ravenswood C, there would be new public access and recreational facilities that would increase recreational enjoyment of the Ravenswood pond cluster. In addition, restored tidal marsh and other habitats would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities at the Ravenswood Ponds.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 to Bedwell Bayfront Park would provide an additional access opportunity, and is consistent with the provision of additional trails as described in the 2007 EIS/R.

Alternative Ravenswood C would be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access. This alternative would provide additional facilities that currently do not exist, and would provide new public access to San Francisco Bay near Greco Island, as described in the 2007 EIS/R.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Alternative Ravenswood D. Under Alternative Ravenswood D, there would be new public access and recreational facilities that would increase recreational enjoyment of the Ravenswood pond cluster. In addition, restored tidal marsh and other habitats would enhance many of the wildlife-viewing opportunities at the Ravenswood Ponds.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 to Bedwell Bayfront Park would provide an additional access opportunity, and is consistent with the provision of additional trails as described in the 2007 EIS/R.

Alternative Ravenswood D would be consistent with BCDC policy to provide maximum feasible public access. This alternative would provide additional facilities that currently do not exist, and would provide new public access to San Francisco Bay near Greco Island, as described in the 2007 EIS/R.

Alternative Mountain View D Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Phase 2 Impact 3.6-2: Permanent removal of existing recreational features (e.g., trails) in locations that visitors have been accustomed to using and that would not be replaced in the general vicinity of the removed feature.

The discussion of Impact 3.6-2 in the Draft EIS/R focused on trails, parking areas, and other land-based recreational access features. That discussion has been expanded in this Final EIS/R to include water-based recreation. Note that the existing conditions regarding water-based recreational features are that, of all of the Phase 2 ponds at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, only Pond A19 at the Island Ponds allows water-based recreation within the pond itself, and only then for seasonal waterfowl hunting with a Refuge-issued permit. None of the other Phase 2 ponds themselves are currently open to boating or other water-based recreation, so there would be no change as a result of this action. There is similarly no change being proposed for the streams around the ponds. However, flow rates outside of boat-accessible waterways near breach locations (in portions of Ravenswood Slough or Mud Slough, for example) would be higher after breaching than they are now because of tidal flow in and out of the ponds.

Alviso-Island Ponds

Alternative Island A (No Action). Under Alternative Island A, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-Island pond cluster that are in use or would be removed.

Alternative Island A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island B. Under Alternative Island B, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Island Ponds that are in use or would be removed.

Alternative Island B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island C. Under Alternative Island C, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Island Ponds that are in use or would be removed.

Alternative Island C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alviso-Mountain View Ponds

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action). Under Alternative Mountain View A, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster that are in use or would be

permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained.

Alternative Mountain View A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Mountain View B. Under Alternative Mountain View B, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained. Water-based recreation within the ponds is currently prohibited. Use of waterways outside of the ponds would not be permanently removed by this alternative, though flow rates may be higher near breaches.

Alternative Mountain View B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Mountain View C. Under Alternative Mountain View C, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained. Use of waterways outside of the ponds would not be permanently removed by this alternative, though flow rates may be higher near breaches.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alviso-A8 Ponds

Alternative A8 A (No Action). Under Alternative A8 A, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-A8 pond cluster that would be permanently removed. Access to existing levees in the project area is allowed to hunters only, by special permit. This access would not permanently change under this alternative.

Alternative A8 A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative A8 B. Under Alternative A8 B, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Alviso-A8 pond cluster that would be permanently removed. Access to existing levees in the project area is allowed to hunters only, by special permit. This access would not permanently change under this alternative.

Alternative A8 B Level of Significance: No Impact

Ravenswood Ponds

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action). Under Alternative Ravenswood A, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Ravenswood pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster (Bedwell Bayfront Park and SR 84 Bay Trail spine) are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained.

Alternative Ravenswood A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood B. Under Alternative Ravenswood B, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Ravenswood pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster (Bedwell Bayfront Park and SR 84 Bay Trail spine) are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained. Water-based recreation within the ponds is currently prohibited. Use of waterways outside of the ponds would not be permanently removed by this alternative, though flow rates may be higher near breaches.

Alternative Ravenswood B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood C. Under Alternative Ravenswood C, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Ravenswood pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster (Bedwell Bayfront Park and SR 84 Bay Trail spine) are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained. Water-based recreation within the ponds is currently prohibited. Use of waterways outside of the ponds would not be permanently removed by this alternative, though flow rates may be higher near breaches.

Alternative Ravenswood C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood D. Under Alternative Ravenswood D, there are currently no existing recreational features in the Ravenswood pond cluster that are in use or would be permanently removed. Existing levees in the project area are fenced, and access is precluded. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the pond cluster (Bedwell Bayfront Park and SR 84 Bay Trail spine) are outside the project area and would continue to be maintained. Water-based recreation within the ponds is currently prohibited. Use of waterways outside of the ponds would not be permanently removed by this alternative, though flow rates may be higher near breaches.

Alternative Ravenswood D Level of Significance: No Impact

Phase 2 Impact 3.6-3: 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.

Alviso-Island Ponds

Alternative Island A (No Action). Under Alternative Island A, no new public access or recreation activities would occur under Phase 2, and the pond cluster would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation uses would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Therefore, no increased demand or physical deterioration of adjacent facilities would be expected to occur.

Alternative Island A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island B. Under Alternative Island B, no new public access or recreation activities would occur under Phase 2, and the Alviso-Island pond cluster would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation uses would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Therefore, no increased demand or physical deterioration of adjacent facilities would be expected to occur.

Alternative Island B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island C. Under Alternative Island C, no new public access or recreation activities would occur under Phase 2 and the pond cluster would continue to be monitored and managed through the activities described in the AMP and in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation uses would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Therefore, no increased demand or physical deterioration of adjacent facilities would be expected to occur.

Alternative Island C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alviso-Mountain View Ponds

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action). Under Alternative Mountain View A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing trails on many of the levees adjacent to the boundary of the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster would continue to be maintained. This alternative would not increase recreation use or cause substantial physical deterioration of adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Mountain View A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Mountain View B. Under Alternative Mountain View B, new public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the Alviso-Mountain View pond cluster.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of project actions is estimated to be approximately 50 to 60 additional users per day during peak periods of use. This incremental increased use is minimal. This alternative would not substantially increase recreation use or cause substantial physical deterioration of adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Mountain View B Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alternative Mountain View C. Under Alternative Mountain View C, new public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative is estimated to be approximately 100 to 150 additional users per day during peak use periods. New trail spurs and viewing platforms are dispersed throughout the project area, and this incremental increased use is minimal. This alternative would not substantially increase recreation use or cause substantial physical deterioration of adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alviso-A8 Ponds

Alternative A8 A (No Action). Under Alternative A8 A, no new public access or recreation activities would occur under Phase 2, and the pond cluster would continue to be monitored and managed in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation uses (hunting) would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Therefore, no increased demand or physical deterioration of adjacent facilities would be expected to occur.

Alternative A8 A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative A8 B. Under Alternative A8 B, no new public access or recreation activities would occur under Phase 2 and the pond cluster would continue to be monitored and managed in accordance with current USFWS practices. Recreation uses (hunting) would remain similar to existing conditions, and would not change in the long term. Therefore, no increased demand or physical deterioration of adjacent facilities would be expected to occur.

Alternative A8 B Level of Significance: No Impact

Ravenswood Ponds

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action). Under Alternative Ravenswood A, no new public access or recreation features would be completed. Existing trails at the adjacent Bedwell Bayfront Park, owned by the City of Menlo Park, and the existing Bay Trail along SR 84 would continue to be used and separately maintained.

There would be no increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative, and there would be no impacts on adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood B. Under Alternative Ravenswood B, there would be new recreational facilities in the form of a viewing platform, but no new public access trails would be completed. Existing trails at the adjacent Bedwell Bayfront Park, owned by the City of Menlo Park, and the existing Bay Trail along SR 84 would continue to be used and separately maintained.

There would be no increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative, and there would be no impacts on adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood C. Under Alternative Ravenswood C, there would be new public access and recreational facilities that would increase recreational enjoyment of the Ravenswood pond cluster. New public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of a viewing platform will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative is estimated to be approximately 100 to 150 additional users per day during peak use periods. New trail spurs and viewing facilities are dispersed throughout the project area, and this incremental increased use is minimal. A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 would provide an additional access opportunity, and may reduce access demand from the existing trailhead at Bedwell Bayfront Park. This alternative would not substantially increase recreation use or cause substantial physical deterioration of adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood C Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alternative Ravenswood D. Under Alternative Ravenswood D, there would be new public access and recreational facilities that would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster. New public access and recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of a viewing platform, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The projected increase in recreation use as a result of this alternative is estimated to be approximately 100 to 150 additional users per day during peak use periods. New trail spurs and viewing platforms are dispersed throughout the project area, and this incremental increased use is minimal. A new trail connection from the Bay Trail along SR 84 would provide an additional access opportunity, and may reduce access demand from the existing trailhead at Bedwell Bayfront Park. This alternative would not substantially increase recreation use or cause substantial physical deterioration of adjacent recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood D Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Phase 2 Impact 3.6-4: Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered park and recreational facilities, or result in the need for new or physically altered park and recreational facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

Alviso-Island Ponds

Alternative Island A (No Action). Under Alternative Island A, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Island A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island B. Under Alternative Island B, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Island B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island C. Under Alternative Island C, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Island C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alviso-Mountain View Ponds

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action). Under Alternative Mountain View A, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Mountain View A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Mountain View B. Under Alternative Mountain View B, new recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster. Physical impacts would occur related to the improvement of a 700-foot-long portion of an existing levee to increase the levee surface width and elevation sufficient to provide a year-round trail. The impact of implementation of the trail-related components of this levee improvement is minimal when considered in the context of physical impacts associated with levee reconstruction and earthwork as part of the overall project.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative Mountain View B Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Alternative Mountain View C. Under Alternative Mountain View C, new recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster. Physical impacts would occur related to the improvement of a 600-foot-long portion of an existing levee to increase the levee surface width and elevation sufficient to provide a year-round trail. Physical impacts would also occur related to the construction of a 700-foot-long boardwalk and improvements to the surface of an existing levee road to make it ADA-compliant. Boardwalk construction would be completed within the footprint of an existing levee, utilizing low-impact construction techniques to minimize physical impacts to adjacent lands. The impact of implementation of the trail-related components of this levee improvement is minimal when considered in the context of physical impacts associated with levee reconstruction and earthwork as part of the overall project.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Alviso-A8 Ponds

Alternative A8 A (No Action). Under Alternative A8 A, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative A8 A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative A8 B. Under Alternative A8 B, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative A8 B Level of Significance: No Impact***Ravenswood Ponds***

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action). Under Alternative Ravenswood A, no new public access or recreation facilities would be provided under Phase 2. Therefore, there would be no physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood B. Under Alternative Ravenswood B, there would be new recreational facilities, but no additional public access trails. Physical impacts would be limited to the construction of a viewing platform at the edge of the existing developed area. Therefore, there would be minimal physical impacts associated with construction of park and recreational facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood B Level of Significance: Less than Significant

Alternative Ravenswood C. Under Alternative Ravenswood C, new recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the Ravenswood pond cluster. Physical impacts would occur from the improvement of a 1,500-foot-long portion of an existing levee to increase the levee surface width and elevation sufficient to provide a year-round trail, construction of a 1,200-foot-long boardwalk, and improvements to the surface of an existing 1,200-foot-long levee to make it ADA-compliant (the levee height would not be elevated). However, even in the absence of the trails, these improvements would be necessary in order to provide protection against tidal flows and to allow management of water quality.

In addition, boardwalk construction would be completed within the footprint of an existing levee, utilizing low-impact construction techniques to minimize physical impacts to adjacent lands. The impact of implementation of trail-related levee improvements is considered minimal when considered in the context of physical impacts associated with levee reconstruction and earthwork as part of the overall project.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative Ravenswood C Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Alternative Ravenswood D. Under Alternative Ravenswood D, new recreational facilities would be provided and would increase recreational enjoyment of the pond cluster. Physical impacts would occur related to the improvement of a 2,700-foot-long portion and a 1,200-foot-long portion of an existing levee to increase the levee surface width and elevation sufficient to provide a year-round trail. However, even in the absence of the trails, these improvements would be necessary in order to provide protection against tidal flows and to allow management of water quality. Construction would be completed within the

footprint of existing levees. The impact of implementation of trail-related levee improvements is considered minimal when considered in the context of physical impacts associated with levee reconstruction and earthwork as part of the overall project.

Improved recreation and public access facilities, including accessibility improvements to existing trails, completion of new trail segments, and addition of viewing facilities, will be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. Their provision is consistent with USFWS and BCDC policies to provide public access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative Ravenswood D Level of Significance: Less than Significant (CEQA); Beneficial (NEPA)

Phase 2 Impact 3.6-5: Result in the temporary construction-related closure of adjacent public parks or other recreation facilities, making such facilities unavailable for public use.

Alviso-Island Ponds

Alternative Island A (No Action). Under Alternative Island A, no activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative Island A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island B. Under Alternative Island B, no activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative Island B Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Island C. Under Alternative Island C, no activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative Island C Level of Significance: No Impact

Alviso-Mountain View Ponds

Alternative Mountain View A (No Action). No activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative Mountain View A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Mountain View B. Under Alternative Mountain View B, temporary closure of some of the existing recreation facilities will be necessary due to construction of the restoration project elements, flood control, and recreation and public access improvements, including reconstruction of some levees that currently provide public access. The Construction Contractor will be required as part of the Construction Bid Documents to provide alternative temporary parking areas and a temporary alternate route to access public facilities, wherever feasible. Some areas will be closed to the public during construction; however, existing alternate recreation features will be available within the vicinity of any temporary closures. All closures will be posted in advance of construction activities, and closure notice materials will direct users to alternate recreation features. A proposed material staging area will be located within the right-of-way of a portion of the Bay Trail in Shoreline Park; however, a detour will be provided throughout construction activities to maintain Bay Trail connectivity.

Similar to the temporary closures of some of these on-land facilities during construction, there would be brief restrictions on water-based recreation in areas immediately adjacent to work on levees (breaching, lowering, or raising) or where boardwalk would be constructed outside of Pond A1. These restrictions would be temporary, and regular recreational use of waterways that allow these uses would resume thereafter.

Although trail connectivity and alternate recreation opportunities will remain throughout construction and public notification of all closures posted as well as alternate recreation opportunities provided, construction activities related to the project will result in the temporary closure of existing trails and recreation facilities; therefore, impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Alternative Mountain View B Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable

Alternative Mountain View C. Under Alternative Mountain View C, , temporary closure of some of the existing recreation facilities may be necessary due to construction of the restoration project elements, flood control, and recreation and public access improvements, including reconstruction of some levees that currently provide public access. The Construction Contractor will be required as part of the Construction Bid Documents to provide alternative temporary parking areas and a temporary alternate route to access public facilities, wherever feasible. Some areas will be closed to the public during construction; however, existing alternate recreation features will be available within the vicinity of any temporary closures. All closures will be posted in advance of construction activities, and closure notice materials will direct users to alternate recreation features. A proposed material staging area will be located within the right-of-way of a portion of the Bay Trail in Shoreline Park; however, a detour will be provided throughout construction activities to maintain Bay Trail connectivity.

Similar to the temporary closures of some of these on-land facilities during construction, there would be brief restrictions on water-based recreation in areas immediately adjacent to work on levees (breaching, lowering, or raising) or where boardwalk would be constructed outside of Pond A1. These restrictions would be temporary, and regular recreational use of waterways that allow these uses would resume thereafter.

Although trail connectivity and alternate recreation opportunities will remain throughout construction and public notification of all closures posted and alternate recreation opportunities provided, construction activities related to the project will result in the temporary closure of existing trails and recreation facilities; therefore, impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Alternative Mountain View C Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable

Alviso-A8 Ponds

Alternative A8 A (No Action). No activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative A8 A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative A8 B. No activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative A8 B Level of Significance: No Impact

Ravenswood Ponds

Alternative Ravenswood A (No Action). Under Alternative Ravenswood A, no activities would occur under Phase 2 that would result in the temporary closure of adjacent public park and recreation facilities.

Alternative Ravenswood A Level of Significance: No Impact

Alternative Ravenswood B. Under Alternative Ravenswood B, temporary closure of some of the existing recreation facilities may be necessary due to construction of the restoration project elements and flood control and recreation improvements, including reconstruction of some levees that currently provide public access. The Construction Contractor will be required as part of the Construction Bid Documents to provide alternative temporary parking areas and a temporary alternate route to access public facilities, wherever feasible. Some areas will be closed to the public during construction; however, existing alternate recreation features will be available within the vicinity of any temporary closures. All closures will be posted in advance of construction activities, and closure notice materials will direct users to alternate recreation features.

Similar to the temporary closures of some of these on-land facilities during construction, there would be brief restrictions on water-based recreation in areas immediately adjacent to work on the levees (breaching, lowering, or adding water control structures) around the Ravenswood Ponds. These restrictions would be temporary, and regular recreational use of waterways that allow these uses would resume thereafter.

Although alternate recreation opportunities will remain throughout construction and public notification of all closures posted and alternate recreation opportunities provided, construction activities related to the project will result in the temporary closure of existing trails and recreation facilities; therefore, impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Alternative Ravenswood B Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable

Alternative Ravenswood C. Under Alternative Ravenswood C, temporary closure of some of the existing recreation facilities may be necessary due to construction of the restoration project elements, flood control, and recreation and public access improvements, including reconstruction of some levees that currently provide public access. The Construction Contractor will be required as part of the Construction Bid Documents to provide alternative temporary parking areas and to provide a temporary alternate route to access public facilities, wherever feasible. Some areas will be closed to the public during construction; however, existing alternate recreation features will be available within the vicinity of any temporary closures. All closures will be posted in advance of construction activities, and closure noticing materials will direct users to alternate recreation features.

Similar to the temporary closures of some of these on-land facilities during construction, there would be brief restrictions on water-based recreation in areas immediately adjacent to work on the levees (breaching, lowering, or adding water control structures) around the Ravenswood Ponds. These restrictions would be temporary, and regular recreational use of waterways that allow these uses would resume thereafter.

Although alternate recreation opportunities will remain throughout construction and public notification of all closures posted and alternate recreation opportunities provided, construction activities related to the project will result in the temporary closure of existing trails and recreation facilities; therefore, impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Alternative Ravenswood C Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable

Alternative Ravenswood D. Under Alternative Ravenswood D, temporary closure of some of the existing recreation facilities may be necessary due to construction of the restoration project elements, flood control, and recreation and public access improvements, including reconstruction of some levees that currently provide public access. The Construction Contractor will be required as part of the Construction Bid Documents to provide alternative temporary parking areas and to provide a temporary alternate route to access public facilities, wherever feasible. Some areas will be closed to the public during construction; however, existing alternate recreation features will be available within the vicinity of any temporary closures. All closures will be posted in advance of construction activities, and closure noticing materials will direct users to alternate recreation features.

Similar to the temporary closures of some of these on-land facilities during construction, there would be brief restrictions on water-based recreation in areas immediately adjacent to work on the levees (breaching, lowering, or adding water control structures) around the Ravenswood Ponds. These restrictions would be temporary, and regular recreational use of waterways that allow these uses would resume thereafter.

Although alternate recreation opportunities will remain throughout construction and public notification of all closures given and alternate recreation opportunities provided, construction activities related to the project will result in the temporary closure of existing trails and recreation facilities; therefore, impacts are significant and unavoidable.

Alternative Ravenswood D Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable**Impact Summary**

Phase 2 impacts and levels of significance are summarized in Table 3.6-6. The levels of significance are those remaining after implementation of program-level mitigation measures, project-level design features, the AMP and other Refuge management practices. In most cases, the Recreation Resources analysis required no project-level mitigation measures to reduce impacts to levels that would be less than significant. However, for Alternatives Ravenswood A, Ravenswood B, Mountain View A, and Mountain View B, the threshold of significance for Impact 3.6-1 would be crossed because those alternatives would not provide maximum feasible public access. The significance determination for these alternatives under Impact 3.6-1 is Potentially Significant. Also, certain temporary impacts associated with construction activities that include closures and disruptions of popular public access and recreation facilities (Impact 3.6-5 for the Action Alternatives at the Alviso-Mountain View Ponds and the Ravenswood Ponds) there are no feasible mitigation measures to reduce these impacts to less than significant. These would be significant and unavoidable.

Table 3.6-6 Phase 2 Summary of Impacts – Recreation Resources

IMPACT	ALTERNATIVE											
	ISLAND			MOUNTAIN VIEW			A8		RAVENSWOOD			
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	A	B	C	D
Phase 2 Impact 3.6-1: Provision of new public access and recreation facilities, including the opening of new areas for recreational purposes and completion of the Bay Trail spine.	NI	LTS	LTS	PS	PS	LTS/ B	NI	NI	PS	PS	LTS/B	LTS/B
Phase 2 Impact 3.6-2: Permanent removal of existing recreational features (trails) in locations that visitors have been accustomed to using and that would not be replaced in the general vicinity of the removed feature.	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Phase 2 Impact 3.6-3: 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.	NI	NI	NI	NI	LTS	LTS	NI	NI	NI	NI	LTS	LTS
Phase 2 Impact 3.6-4: Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered park and recreational facilities, or result in the need for new or physically altered park and recreational facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.	NI	NI	NI	NI	LTS/ B	LTS/ B	NI	NI	NI	LTS	LTS/B	LTS/B
Phase 2 Impact 3.6-5: Result in the temporary construction-related closure of adjacent public parks or other recreation facilities, making such facilities unavailable for public use.	NI	NI	NI	NI	SU	SU	NI	NI	NI	SU	SU	SU
Notes: Alternative A at each pond cluster is the No Action Alternative (No Project Alternative under CEQA). B = Beneficial (NEPA only) LTS = Less than Significant NI = No Impact, PS = Potentially Significant SU = Significant and Unavoidable												

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