

3.14 Recreation

This section describes the regulatory and environmental setting for recreation resources in the program and individual project areas. It also describes impacts on these resources that could result from implementation of the program and the two individual projects.

3.14.1 Existing Conditions

Regulatory Setting

Federal

There are no relevant federal regulations for recreation.

State

There are no relevant state regulations for recreation.

Local

Alameda County

Countywide Recreation Plan

The Recreation Plan, one of the County-wide elements of the General Plan, was adopted in June 1956 and last amended in May 1994. The Recreation Plan provides a guide for private and public acquisition and development of recreation areas and facilities. It contains general planning objectives related to promote and preserve recreational opportunities throughout the County.

East County Area Plan

The Public Services and Facilities Element contains goals, policies, and programs to ensure the development of local and regional parks throughout the East County Area. The Land Use Element contains various goals, policies and programs regarding Sensitive Lands and Regionally Significant Open Space that apply to recreation that include the following (Alameda County Community Development Agency 2000:18, 20).

Goal: To protect regionally significant open space and agricultural land from development.

Policy 52: The County shall preserve open space areas for the protection of public health and safety, provision of recreational opportunities, production of natural resources (e.g., agriculture, windpower, and mineral extraction), protection of sensitive viewsheds, preservation of biological resources, and the physical separation between neighboring communities.

Policy 54: The County shall approve only open space, park, recreational, agricultural, limited infrastructure, public facilities (e.g., limited infrastructure, hospitals, research facilities, landfill sites, jails, etc.) and other similar and compatible uses outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Policy 70: The County shall work with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD), and other relevant agencies to ensure

that open space trails adjacent to San Joaquin, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties connect with trail systems in these other counties.

East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan

The 1997 *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan* (Master Plan) is a policy document that guides the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) in future expansion of parks, trails, and services for its regional parks in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties (East Bay Regional Park District 2013). The Master Plan includes policies for conserving natural and cultural resources; providing for recreational opportunities; and providing for the balanced distribution, acquisition, protection, restoration, management, and development of the regional parks. The EBRPD Board of Directors recently approved the 2013 Master Plan and 2013 Master Plan Map (East Bay Regional Park District 2013). The 2013 Master Plan Map identifies the current system of regional parks, open spaces, and trails.

Environmental Setting

Alameda County contains numerous recreational facilities, including major parks and open space areas, local parks, and private recreational facilities. Several such areas provide recreational opportunities within and in the vicinity of the program area. The program area is in the eastern portion of the county in the AWRA. The program area is characterized by rolling hills, few trees, and grazing land. Parks and trails are shown on Figure 3.1-2.

Regional Trails

The EBRPD Master Plan map identifies several regional trails within the program area (East Bay Regional Park District 2013).

- Brushy Peak to Del Vale.
- San Joaquin to Shadow Cliffs.
- Brushy Peak to Bethany Reservoir.
- Vasco Caves to Brushy Peak.

Regional Preserves and Recreation Areas

A portion of the Tesla Future Regional Preserve is in the southeast portion of the program area, along the Alameda County border. A portion of the Vasco Hills Regional Preserve is also located in the northwestern portion of the program area.

Bethany Reservoir is in the northeast portion of the program area. The reservoir is a place for water-oriented recreation such as wind surfing and fishing, and also contains a bike trail along the California Aqueduct Bikeway (California Department of Parks and Recreation 2013). It is considered a potential Regional Recreation Area (East Bay Regional Park District 2013).

3.14.2 Environmental Impacts

Methods for Analysis

Identifying the proposed program's impact on recreational resources involved a review of the Alameda County General Plan policies and the EBRPD Master Plan.

Determination of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, program Alternative 1, program Alternative 2, the Golden Hills project, or the Patterson Pass project would be considered to have a significant effect if it would result in any of the conditions listed below.

- 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.
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact REC-1a-1: 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—program Alternative 1: 417 MW (no impact)

There are no existing neighborhood parks within or in the vicinity of the program area. Existing regional parks and other recreational facilities in the vicinity of the program area would not be affected because program Alternative 1 would not involve new potential users of parks or other recreational facilities. Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of available facilities. The operations and maintenance workforce at the site would be the same for program Alternative 1 as for the existing wind energy operations. No additional permanent employees would be required. This alternative is not anticipated to increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-1a-2: 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—program Alternative 2: 450 MW (no impact)

There are no existing neighborhood parks within or in the vicinity of the program area. Existing regional parks and other recreational facilities in the vicinity of the program area would not be affected because program Alternative 2 would not involve new potential users of parks or other recreational facilities. Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of available facilities. The operations and maintenance workforce at the site would be the same for program Alternative 2 as for the existing wind energy operations. No additional permanent employees would be required. This alternative is not anticipated to increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-1b: 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—Golden Hills Project (no impact)

There are no existing neighborhood parks on site or in the vicinity of the Golden Hills Project. Existing regional parks and other recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project area would not be affected because the Golden Hills Project would not involve new potential users of parks or other recreational facilities. Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are

therefore among the existing users of available facilities. The operations and maintenance workforce at the site would be the same for the Golden Hills Project as for the existing wind energy operations. No additional permanent employees would be required. The Golden Hills Project is not anticipated to increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-1c: 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—Patterson Pass Project (no impact)

There are no existing neighborhood parks on site or in the vicinity of the Patterson Pass Project. Existing regional parks and other recreational facilities in the vicinity of the Patterson Pass Project would not be affected because the Patterson Pass Project would not involve new potential users of parks or other recreational facilities. Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of available facilities. The operations and maintenance workforce at the site would be the same for the Patterson Pass Project as for the existing wind energy operations. No additional permanent employees would be required. The Patterson Pass Project is not anticipated to increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-2a-1: Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment—program Alternative 1: 417 MW (no impact)

Program Alternative 1 would not include recreational facilities. It would not require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities because implementing Alternative 1 would not generate a significant number of new users of such facilities (described above under Impact REC-1a-1). Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of existing recreational facilities. Operation and maintenance activities would be similar to existing activity. Because implementing this alternative would not result in an increase in demand for recreational facilities, no new recreational facilities would need to be developed or provided that could have a physical effect on the environment. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-2a-2: Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment—program Alternative 2: 450 MW (no impact)

Program Alternative 2 would not include recreational facilities. It would not require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities because implementing Alternative 2 would not generate a significant number of new users of such facilities (described above under Impact REC-1a-2). Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of existing recreational facilities. Operation and maintenance activities would be similar to existing activity. Because implementing this alternative would not result in an increase in demand for recreational facilities, no new recreational facilities would need to be developed or provided that could have a physical effect on the environment. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-2b: Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment—Golden Hills Project (no impact)

The Golden Hills Project would not include recreational facilities. It would not require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities because the proposed project would not generate a significant number of new users of such facilities (described above under impact REC-1b). Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of existing recreational facilities. Operation and maintenance activities would be similar to existing activity. Because the Golden Hills Project would not result in an increase in demand for recreational facilities, no new recreational facilities would need to be developed or provided that could have a physical effect on the environment. There would be no impact.

Impact REC-2c: Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment—Patterson Pass Project (no impact)

The Patterson Pass Project would not include recreational facilities. It would not require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities because the Patterson Pass Project would not generate a significant number of new users of such facilities (described above under impact REC-1c). Construction workers are presumed to reside locally or regionally and are therefore among the existing users of existing recreational facilities. Operation and maintenance activities would be similar to existing activity. Because the Patterson Pass Project would not result in an increase in demand for recreational facilities, no new recreational facilities would need to be developed or provided that could have a physical effect on the environment. There would be no impact.

3.14.3 References Cited

Alameda County. 2000. *East County Area Plan*. Adopted May 1994. Modified by passage of Measure D, effective December 22, 2000. Oakland, CA.

California Department of Parks and Recreation. 2013. *Bethany Reservoir SRA*. Available: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=562. Accessed June 26, 2013.

East Bay Regional Park District. 2013. *The District Master Plan*. Available: <http://www.ebparks.org/planning/mp>. Accessed: June 26, 2013; August 9, 2013.