

5. CEQA TOPICAL ANALYSES

5.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for evaluation of growth-inducing impacts are set forth in Section 15126.2 (d) of CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387). CEQA requires that both direct and indirect impacts of all phases of a proposed project be considered. Growth-inducement is typically considered to be a direct or indirect effect of an action that either directly fosters growth or removes an obstacle to economic or population growth, or the construction of new housing. CEQA Guidelines also require evaluation of new infrastructure and service facilities needed to serve growth-induced by a project. The Guidelines note that “it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment;” therefore, the nature of the effects of any induced growth also must be considered to determine if the impacts of that growth are potentially significant.

Some projects may be considered growth inducing while others may be growth accommodating (i.e., they are intended to accommodate planned growth, but do not induce that growth). The distinction here is primarily whether or not a project removes an obstacle to growth. It is sometimes argued that, if growth is already planned for in a jurisdiction’s General Plan, then infrastructure supporting that development is growth accommodating rather than growth inducing. However, CEQA is concerned with on-the-ground impacts to the environment. Therefore, if planned development cannot move forward absent a particular infrastructure project, or the development is substantially encouraged by that infrastructure, that project is generally considered growth inducing.

CEQA Guidelines also state (Section 16064 (d)(3)) that an indirect physical change is to be considered only if that change is “a reasonably foreseeable impact which may be caused by the project. A change which is speculative or unlikely to occur is not reasonably foreseeable.”

The Putah Creek Restoration – Upper Reach Project (Project) includes channel reconfiguration, habitat restoration, and maintenance components. The Project components would not have any effect on growth, as they would not provide any new housing, infrastructure, or substantial economic activity. In addition, it would not

remove any obstacles to growth, expand infrastructure, or develop housing or economic activity.

The Project also would not induce growth. Although it would work in concert with the proposed Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) restoration downstream, the proposed Project would not induce the implementation of that project, which is being carried out independently by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (funded under the same grant as this Project). Neither the proposed Project nor the YBWA project is expected to substantially induce demand for new residences or businesses in the adjacent areas, although the restored stream would provide a more aesthetically pleasing environment that could slightly increase desirability of adjacent parcels; therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

5.2 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS

Under each resource topic, any unavoidable significant adverse impacts identified are analyzed in detail. The only potentially significant and unavoidable impact from the Project would be temporary construction noise impacts.

5.3 SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS/MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed Project would be located primarily in agricultural areas of Yolo and Solano Counties, although portions of the Project would be adjacent to more urbanized City of Winters and University of California, Davis (UC Davis) lands. A cumulative impact refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment, which results from incremental impacts of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period.

5.3.1 Yolo County Projects

A review of the Yolo County current projects list (<http://www.yolocounty.org/community-services/planning-public-works/planning-division/current-projects> (viewed May 3, 2016) indicated no County projects that may have impacts overlapping those of the proposed Project.

5.3.2 Solano County Projects

In March 2015 the Solano County Board of Supervisors approved funding for the following projects in the Project area, to be conducted in 2015-17:

- The Midway-Sievers safety improvement project, which will construct paved shoulder improvements on Midway Road from Interstate 80 to Porter Road, and on Sievers Road from Halley Road to Stevenson Bridge Road.
- The 2015 paving project, which will provide paved shoulder improvements on Winters Road from Allendale Road to Wolfskill Road, and on Midway Road from Timm Road to the Vacaville city limit. The improvement work to Midway Road is included in the English Hills Transportation Impact Fee.
- The culvert repair project, which will make significant repairs to dilapidated culverts under Steiger Hill Road and Cantelow Road, according to a staff report. These are large culverts that do not qualify for federal funding as bridges and must be maintained by the county, the report said.
- A bridge design contract was awarded on March 17, 2016 for the Stevenson Road Bridge rehabilitation project. Significant structural design work is anticipated to rehabilitate the existing deficient structure.

A review of Solano County active projects (May 2016) indicate no County projects that may have impacts overlapping those of the proposed Project.

5.3.3 University of California, Davis Project

UC Davis has a large number of “current projects” listed on its website, however many of these are old and have already been constructed (http://sustainability.ucdavis.edu/progress/commitment/environmental_review/current_projects.html, accessed May 3, 2016). Current UC Davis projects in the Project area include:

- The Shrem Museum of Art building, currently scheduled to open in November 2016, which would include approximately 30,000 square feet of space and would be located on 1.6 undeveloped acres in the southern portion of the Central Campus at UC Davis in Yolo County.
- The UC Davis Large Solar Power Plant (LSPP) project which is planned for up to 70 acres and would help the campus meet demand for electricity and achieve goals for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The site is along just north of Putah Creek Levee Road, the north levee of Putah Creek, approximately ½-mile east of Old

Davis Road on land used for agricultural production. Project construction was completed in nearly 2016.

- The Orchard Park Student Housing redevelopment which proposes to consolidate the Solano Park and Orchard Park student housing areas by redeveloping Orchard Park at a higher density and suspending housing operations at the Solano Park housing area, just south of the old mill race on the UC Davis campus. At Orchard Park, the approximately 20-acre site would undergo a demolition and redevelopment process from 2014 through 2016 to provide housing for a total of 1,410 people in 550 dwelling units.
- UC Davis proposes to construct and occupy a two-story lecture hall of approximately 17,500 square feet within the UC Davis core campus. The project site at the southwest intersection of Kleiber Hall Drive and California Avenue would provide 550 to 600 seats for campus lectures and would help to better serve the increasing demand for lecture space on the campus.
- The Veterinary Medicine Student Services Development which would consist of two new buildings: 1) the Veterinary Medicine Student Services and Administration Center, and 2) the Scrubs Café building. The project construction site is approximately 2 acres at the southeast corner of where Garrod Drive makes a 90-degree bend near the Veterinary Medicine 3B building. Construction is planned for completion in 2016.
- UC Davis proposes to renovate Walker Hall, a building of approximately 45,000 square feet on a site of approximately two acres, in the core area of the UC Davis main campus. The building is currently vacant and after construction, the proposed project would provide classroom seating for approximately 390 students and office space for approximately 50 employees. The CEQA review for this project is currently (May 2016) in progress.

5.3.4 City of Winters Projects

The City of Winters is currently implementing the following projects:

- Railroad Ave over Dry Slough 0.37 miles north of County Road 33, bridge replacement. The work generally consists of, but not limited to, the following: clearing, grubbing, temporary detour, bridge removal, bridge and roadway construction, temporary detour removal, signing and striping. Work is scheduled for completion in 2015-2016.
- The Putah Creek River Parkways project narrowed the low-flow channel along about 1 mile of creek. The project cut fill from steep banks, and moved it into a form such

that the creek now has a walkable riparian area, and improved wildlife habitat. The project was completed with the completion of the Winters Road Bridge Replacement in early 2016 (see below).

- The Winters Road Bridge Replacement project, a joint effort between Solano County and the City of Winters, involves the replacement of a 420-foot-long, three-span, earth-filled concrete arch bridge that was constructed in 1907, and is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The replacement structure consists of a 453-foot-long, three-span cast-in-place reinforced concrete box girder superstructure simulated arched spans. Construction began in 2013 and was completed in early 2016.

5.3.5 California Department of Fish and Wildlife Projects

YBWA Putah Creek Restoration

The Restoration Plan would route a new stream channel through irrigated pasture, row crop or fallow ground within the YBWA. The new channel would bypass the last 2.3 miles of stream channel (a constructed irrigation canal) through which Putah Creek currently flows. Channel design will include additional shallow water smolt-rearing habitat that is relatively free of non-native predatory fish. The channel would be designed in a manner that will create a series of shallow, seasonal wetlands that would provide high quality rearing habitat.

The Restoration Plan also would include a new water-control structure to divert water into the new channel alignment while also allowing continuation of the existing water supply operation along Lower Putah Creek. The water control structure would be a concrete structure with interlocking aluminum stop logs to control flow into the new channel. The water control structure would be operated using the same schedule currently in place for the Los Rios check dam. The new water control structure would be closed from mid-March to mid-November, allowing water to pool within Lower Putah Creek and to be diverted for agricultural and wildlife management purposes. The new water control structure would be open from mid-November to mid-March and water would flow from Lower Putah Creek into the new channel. The water control structure would also provide a crossing over the connection point, aligned with the existing north-south access road. The crossing would be sized to accommodate agricultural equipment up to 16 feet wide.

5.3.6 Cumulative Impacts

Each resource topic analyzed in this EIR includes an analysis of the cumulative impacts and identifies mitigation measures. The cumulative impacts identified in this EIR include issues regarding: hydrology and geomorphology, water quality, geology and soils, air quality, noise, aesthetics, land use, recreation, transportation/traffic, public services, utilities and service systems, and hazardous materials.

Hydrology

As is described in detail in Section 3.1, Hydrology, the proposed Project, after mitigation, would have no adverse long-term effects on hydrology within the project area or the vicinity. The proposed project could result in short-term impacts on erosion and siltation, and on stormwater drainage systems. These potential impacts would be reduced below significance through regulatory compliance with permitting processes and through the implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.1-1, 3.1-2, 3.14-1, and 3.14-3. In order for the Project to contribute to a significant cumulative impact, it would have to create an impact that would exist long enough to combine with other projects to create that significant effect. The absence of residual impacts eliminates the potential for the Project to create overlapping or interactive impacts with other projects or make a substantial incremental contribution to cumulative conditions to result in cumulative impacts related to hydrology. Consequently, the proposed Project would not incrementally contribute to a significant cumulative effect on hydrology.

Water Quality

As is described in detail in Section 3.2 Water Quality, the proposed Project would have no adverse short- or long-term effects on water quality within the Project Area or the vicinity. The only potential impacts of the proposed Project would be impacts related to herbicide use and short-term impacts related to Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements. These potential impacts would be reduced below significance through regulatory compliance with permitting processes and through the implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.1-1 and 3.4-6. Therefore, the Project would not incrementally contribute to any significant cumulative impacts related to water quality.

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

As is described in detail in Section 3.3 Geology and Soils, and Mineral Resources, the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on geology and soils. The only potential impacts of the proposed project would be short-term impacts on erosion, and these potential impacts would be reduced below significance through regulatory

compliance with permitting processes and through the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-1. Implementation of this mitigation measure also would ensure that Project-related activities would not incrementally contribute to any significant cumulative impacts related to geology and soils.

The proposed restoration Project would have no impact on mineral resources. As described in the Setting section, neither the Solano County General Plan nor the Yolo County General Plan identifies the Putah Creek area among the County's Mineral Resource Zones. The Yolo County General Plan identifies natural gas fields are located in the area (the Winters Gas and Putah Sink Gas fields and the abandoned Dixon Gas and Davis Southeast Gas fields). The Project would not prevent future use or development of these natural gas resources because the Project would not involve deep subsurface activities and would not construct any human habitation or commercial or industrial development that would place people or large structures along the creek. Therefore the project would not contribute to any cumulative impacts to mineral resources.

Biological Resources

As is described in detail in Section 3.4 Biological Resources, the proposed Project would have significant but mitigable effects on biological resources within the Project Area or the vicinity. Impacts to special-status species (including the song sparrow [Modesto Population], Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, Swainson's hawk, western pond turtle, and the white-tailed kite); to migratory birds; to riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitat; to species movement; and to water quality for fish within the Project Area would be either less than significant or mitigated to that level. These potential impacts would be reduced below significance through the implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-6.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Per the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD) CEQA Handbook for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts, any proposed project that would individually have a significant air quality impact (exceed YSAQMD CEQA Significance Thresholds) would also be considered to have a significant cumulative impact (YSAQMD, 2007). All air quality and GHG impacts would be less than significant for the proposed Project; therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant contribution to cumulative impacts.

Noise

Potential project-related noise impacts would not result in any potentially significant cumulative impacts. Construction-related noise impacts are short-term and would cease upon completion of construction. No long-term noise would be generated as a result of the Project, which would result in the restoration of Putah Creek, and no concurrent major construction projects have been identified in the vicinity of Putah Creek; therefore, the Project would not contribute to cumulative noise impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As is described in detail in Section 3.7, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the proposed Project would have no adverse short- or long-term impacts related to hazards or hazardous materials within the Project Area or the vicinity. The only potential impacts of the proposed Project would be potential impacts related to unexpected discovery of hazardous materials during excavation; minor contamination from drips and leaks from construction vehicles and equipment; or the misapplication of herbicides during activities to reduce invasive species and weeds. These potential impacts would be localized and reduced a less-than-significant level through the implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.7-1, 3.7-2, and 3.4-6; therefore, the Project would not contribute to any cumulative impacts to hazards or hazardous materials.

Land Use and Agricultural Resources

The Project could have temporary impacts to access to agricultural lands during construction. These impacts would be fully mitigated by measures identified in Section 3.8, *Land Use and Agricultural Resources*, of this EIR; therefore the project's contribution to any cumulative impacts of the other projects listed in this section would not be considerable.

Aesthetics

The project could have temporary impacts to views of the creek and associated vegetation during construction and until new vegetation becomes established. These impacts would be localized and not overlap visual impacts of any of the other cumulative projects with the exception of work at the connection of this Project with the YBWA project, where there are no sensitive receptors (i.e., residents or recreational users) to visual changes. The new Winters Putah Creek Road Bridge should be completed prior to implementation of the Project. Further, mitigated by measures identified in Section 3.8, *Land Use*, of this EIR would reduce the project's cumulative impacts to less than significant; therefore, the Project's contribution cumulative impacts would not be considerable.

Recreation

The Project could have temporary impacts on access to recreational areas. These would be minimized by measures identified in Section 3.10, *Recreation*, of this EIR. It is unlikely that any of the Project's impacts to recreational resources would overlap with impacts of the other cumulative projects and, if any overlap were to occur, it would be of short duration; therefore, the project's contribution to any cumulative impacts on recreational resources would not be considerable.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources in the Project Area and surrounding region generally consist of early Native American habitation and resource processing sites, and buildings and structures associated with late 19th and early 20th century agricultural and transportation activities. Particularly from the latter half of the 20th century to the present, prehistoric sites and historic-era buildings and structures have been destroyed, disturbed, and modified. During this period, the creation and enforcement of various regulations such as CEQA protecting cultural resources have substantially reduced the rate and intensity of these impacts; however, even with these regulations, cultural resources are still degraded or destroyed as cumulative development in the Davis and Winters area proceeds.

Research conducted for the Project indicates that the Project Area contains prehistoric cultural resources that are considered significant as defined by CEQA. As-yet undiscovered cultural resources might also be present in the Project Area. The cultural resources mitigation measures discussed above would reduce impacts on prehistoric and historic-era resources and human interments to less-than-significant levels. Implementing these mitigation measures also would ensure that Project-related activities would not incrementally contribute to any significant cumulative impacts on important cultural resources in the Project. These measures ensure compliance with CEQA guidance. Consequently, the proposed Project would not incrementally contribute to a significant cumulative effect on cultural resources.

Transportation/Traffic

As described in detail in Section 3.12, *Transportation/Traffic*, the proposed Project would have no impact on transportation and traffic. The Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. The Project would contribute a small number of vehicle trips during short-term construction; no more than 42 daily one-way 3- and 4-axle-truck trips to haul materials, and an expected maximum of 12 daily one-way passenger vehicle trips per day for commuting workers, but these trips do not create a

significant impact. Post-construction Project traffic would be minimal. Cumulative impacts would be further minimized through limits on the annual scope of activities, as described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*. Activities would be conducted in a discontinuous pattern to further avoid or minimize any potential construction-related effects, including traffic impacts.

In order for the Project to contribute to a significant cumulative impact on transportation and traffic, it would have to create an impact that would combine with other projects to create that significant effect. The Project would involve low traffic-generating activities in mostly rural areas with light traffic. Other cumulative projects may overlap Project traffic generation for short periods, but the overlap is very unlikely to significantly affect local or regional traffic conditions. Mitigation measures identified in this EIR would further limit the Project's contribution to these temporary traffic effects; therefore, the proposed Project would have a less than cumulatively considerable impact on transportation and traffic and no mitigation is required.

Public Services

The proposed Project would not provide new public access or otherwise substantially increase public use of the creek so no substantial new demand on police or fire services would occur. It is possible that additional boaters may use the creek and existing recreation areas, but overall increased numbers would be low and conditions for boaters would be safer than at present, so any increase in emergency calls would be minimal. Additionally, the Project's removal of weedy and non-native vegetation would reduce fire risks compared with existing conditions; therefore, the Project would not contribute to any potential cumulative impacts on public services from other nearby projects.

Utilities and Service Systems

As is described in detail in Section 3.14, *Utilities*, the proposed Project would have no adverse long-term effects on utilities within the Project Area or the vicinity. The only potential impacts of the proposed Project would be potential short-term impacts on small roadway or agricultural storm drains, and potential long-term and short-term impacts in the event of inadvertent damage to underground pipelines during excavation. It is unlikely that any of these Project impacts would overlap with impacts of the other cumulative projects and, if any overlap were to occur, it would be of short duration. Moreover, these potential impacts would be reduced below significance through regulatory compliance with permitting processes and through the

implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.1-2, 3.1-2, and 3.14-1; therefore, the Project would have no impact on cumulative conditions.

5.4 IRREVERSIBLE/IRRETRIEVABLE IMPACTS

As described above, the proposed Project would permanently convert large pool areas to flowing stream areas. The Project also would irreversibly alter the stream's degraded habitat to a more ecologically productive natural habitat. Construction of the Project would result in the irretrievable use of natural resources including fuels and rock materials.

