

# Recreation

## Chapter 3.15

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The proposed Project will result in less than significant impacts related to Recreation. No mitigation measures will be required. A detailed review of potential impacts is provided in the analysis below.

### INTRODUCTION

#### California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Requirements

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) addresses potential impacts to Recreation. As required in Section 15126, all phases of the proposed Project will be considered as part of the potential environmental impact.

As noted in Section 15126.2 (a), “[a]n EIR shall identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. In assessing the impact of a proposed project on the environment, the lead agency should normally limit its examination to changes in the existing physical conditions in the affected area as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, or where no notice of preparation is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced. Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects. The discussion should include relevant specifics of the area, the resources involved, physical changes, alterations to ecological systems, and changes induced in population distribution, population concentration, the human use of the land (including commercial and residential development), health and safety problems caused by the physical changes, and other aspects of the resource base such as water, historical resources, scenic quality, and public services. The EIR shall also analyze any significant environmental effects the project might cause by bringing development and people into the area affected. For example, an EIR on a subdivision astride an active fault line should identify as a significant effect the seismic hazard to future occupants of the subdivision. The subdivision will have the effect of attracting people to the location and exposing them to the hazards found there. Similarly, the EIR should evaluate any potentially significant impacts of locating development in other areas susceptible to hazardous conditions (e.g., floodplains, coastlines, wildfire risk areas) as identified in authoritative hazard maps, risk assessments or in land use plans addressing such hazards areas.”<sup>1</sup>

The environmental setting provides a description of the Recreational Resources in the County. The regulatory setting provides a description of applicable Federal, State and Local regulatory

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<sup>1</sup> 2012 CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2 (a)

policies that were developed in part from information contained in the Tulare County 2030 General Plan, the Tulare County General Plan Background Report and/or the Tulare County General Plan Revised DEIR incorporated by reference and summarized below. Additional documents utilized are noted as appropriate. A description of the potential impacts of the proposed Project is provided and includes the identification of feasible mitigation measures (if necessary and feasible) to avoid or lessen the impacts.

### Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA checklist item questions. The following are potential thresholds for significance.

- Increase use of existing recreational facilities
- Include or require additional recreational facilities

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

“Tulare County contains several county, state, and federal parks. Aside from parks in the county, there are many open space areas as well. This section will highlight these various parks and open space areas and identify recreational opportunities within them.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to the 13 parks and recreation facilities that are owned and operated by Tulare County, there are State Parks and Forests, National Parks and National Forests, and trails and recreational areas.

### ***Federal Recreation Areas***

#### Lake Kaweah

“Lake Kaweah was formed after the construction of the Terminus Dam on the Kaweah River in 1962. The lake offers many recreational opportunities including fishing, camping, and boating. Lake Kaweah is located 20 miles east of Visalia on Highway 198 and was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for flood control and water conservation purposes. The lake has a maximum capacity to store 143,000 acre-feet of water. There are a total of 80 campsites at the lake’s Horse Creek Campground, which contains toilets, showers and a playground. Campfire programs are also available. Aside from camping, boat ramps are provided at the Lemon Hill and Kaweah Recreation Areas. Both Kaweah and Horse Creek provide picnic areas, barbecue grills and piped water. Swimming is allowed in designated areas. In addition, there is a one-mile hiking trail between Slick Rock and Cobble Knoll, which is ideal for bird watching.”<sup>3</sup>

#### Lake Success

“Lake Success was formed by construction of the Success Dam on the Tule River in 1961. The lake offers many recreational activities including fishing, boating, waterskiing, and picnicking. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) constructed this reservoir for both flood control

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<sup>2</sup> General Plan Background Report, page 4-1

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., page 4-7

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and irrigation purposes. The lake has a capacity of 85,000 acre-feet of water. The lake is located eight miles east of Porterville in the Sierra Nevada foothills area. Recreational opportunities include ranger programs, camping at the Tule campground, which provides 104 sites, boating, fishing, picnic sites, playgrounds and a softball field. Seasonal hunting is also permitted in the 1,400-acre Wildlife Management Area.”<sup>4</sup>

***National Parks and National Forests***

“Most of the recreational opportunities in the county are located in Sequoia National Forest, Giant Sequoia National Monument, and in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI). Although these parks span adjacent counties, they make a significant contribution to the recreational opportunities that Tulare County has to offer.”<sup>5</sup>

**Table 3.15-1  
National Park and Forest Facilities**

| Recreation Area                               | Location   | Camping Sites      |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <b>Sequoia National Forest</b>                |  |                    |
| Gray’s Meadow                                 | 5 miles West of Independence on Onion Valley Road.                 | 52 tent/RV sites   |
| Oak Creek                                     | 4 ½ miles NW of Independence off Highway 395.                      | 21 tent/RV sites   |
| Onion Valley                                  | 14 miles West of Independence on Onion Valley Road.                | 29 tent/RV sites   |
| Stony Creek                                   | 14 miles SE of Grant Grove on Generals Highway.                    | 49 tent/RV sites   |
| Whitney Portal                                | 13 miles West of Lone Pine on Whitney Portal Road.                 | 43 tent/RV sites   |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |  | <b>194 sites</b>   |
| <b>Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Park</b> |  |                    |
| Atwell Mill                                   | Sequoia, 19 miles from Highway 198 on Mineral King Road.           | 21 tent sites      |
| Azalea  | Kings Canyon, 3 ½ miles from Kings Canyon Park entrance.           | 110 tent sites     |
| Buckeye Flat                                  | Sequoia, 11 miles South of Giant Forest of Generals Highway.       | 28 tent sites      |
| Canyon View                                   | Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon  | 23 tent sites      |
| Cold Springs                                  | Sequoia, Mineral King Area.  | 25 tent sites      |
| Crystal Springs                               | Kings Canyon, ½ mile North of Grant Grove.                         | 67 tent/RV sites   |
| Dorst Creek                                   | Sequoia, 9 miles North of Lodgepole off Generals Highway.          | 210 tent/RV sites  |
| Lodgepole                                     | Sequoia, 4 miles NE of Cedar Grove.                                | 203 tent/RV sites  |
| Moraine                                       | Kings Canyon, 1 mile East of Cedar Grove.                          | 120 tent/RV sites  |
| Potwisha                                      | Sequoia, 4 miles NE of Ash Mountain entrance off Generals Highway. | 42 tent/RV sites   |
| Sentinel                                      | In the Cedar Grove area near the Kings River.                      | 82 tent sites      |
| Sheep Creek                                   | Kings Canyon, 1/2-mile West of Cedar Grove.                        | 111 tent/RV sites  |
| South Fork                                    | Sequoia, 13 miles on South Fork from Highway 198.                  | 10 tent sites      |
| Sunset  | In the Grant Grove area 3 miles from Kings Canyon park entrance.   | 157 tent sites     |
| <b>Total</b>                                  |  | <b>1,209 sites</b> |

Source: Tulare County Resource Management Agency, Parks and Recreation Branch, 2008; Automobile Club of Southern California, Tulare County Map.

***Sequoia National Forest***

“Sequoia National Forest takes its name from the Giant Sequoia, which is the world’s largest tree. There are more than 30 groves of sequoias in the lower slopes of the park. The park includes over 1,500 miles of maintained roads, 1,000 miles of abandoned roads and 850 miles of

<sup>4</sup> General Plan Background Report, page 4-7

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., page 4-8

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trails for hikers, off-highway vehicle users and horseback riders. The Pacific Crest Trail connecting Canada and Mexico, crosses a portion of the forest, 78 miles of the total 2,600 miles of the entire trail. It is estimated that 10 to 13 million people visit the forest each year.”<sup>6</sup>

*Giant Sequoia National Monument*

“The Giant Sequoia National Monument was created in 2000 by President Clinton in an effort to preserve 34 groves of ancient sequoias located in the Sequoia National Forest. The Monument includes a total of 327,769 acres of federal land, and provides various recreational opportunities, including camping, picnicking, fishing, and whitewater rafting. According to the Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan EIS, the Monument includes a total of 21 family campgrounds with 502 campsites and seven group campgrounds. In addition, there are approximately 160 miles of system trails, including 12 miles of the Summit National Recreation Trail.”<sup>7</sup>

*Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)*

“The U.S. Congress created the Kings Canyon National Park in 1940 and Sequoia National Park in 1890. Because they share many miles of common boundaries, they are managed as one park. The extreme large elevation ranges in the parks (from 1,500 to 14,491 feet above sea level), provide for a wide range of vegetative and wildlife habitats. This is witnessed from exploring Mt. Whitney, which rises to an elevation of 14,491 feet, and is the tallest mountain in the contiguous United States. During the summer months, park rangers lead walks through the parks, and tours of Crystal and Boyden Caves. During the winter, visitors explore the higher elevations of the parks via cross country skis or snowshoes, or hike the trails in the foothills. The SEKI also contains visitor lodges, the majority of which are open year round. According to the National Parks Conservation Association, a combined total of approximately 1.4 million people visit the two parks on an annual basis.”<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3.15-2  
Recreational Areas in Tulare County**

| ID            | Recreation Area             | Location   | Acres | Type of Use/Features  |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--|-------|---|
| <b>County</b> |                             |  |       |   |
| 1             | Alpaugh Park                | Located in Alpaugh on Road 40.                     | 3     | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No entrance fee.   |
| 2             | Balch Park Campgrounds      | 20 miles NE of Springville in the Sierras.         | 160   | 71 Campsites. No reservations taken; first come first serve basis. Entrance fee for vehicles.           |
| 3             | Bartlett Park               | 8 miles east of Porterville on North Drive.        | 127.5 | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Entrance fee for vehicles.                                     |
| 4             | Camp COTYAC                 | Near Ponderosa in Eastern Tulare County.           | 8     | County of Tulare Youth Adventure Camp (Camp COTYAC). Cabins, lodge with kitchen, restrooms and showers. |
| 5             | Cutler Park                 | 5 miles east of Visalia on Highway 216 to Ivanhoe. | 50    | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Entrance fee for vehicles.                                     |
| 6             | Elk Bayou Park              | 6 miles SE of Tulare on Avenue 200.                | 60    | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee for day use.  |
| 7             | Kings River Nature Preserve | 2 miles east of Highway 99 on Road 28              | 85    | This park is only for school environmental programs.  |

<sup>6</sup> General Plan Background Report, page 4-9

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., page 4-9

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., page 4-9

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| ID                 | Recreation Area                                | Location   | Acres | Type of Use/Features  |
|--------------------|--|--|-------|---|
| 8                  | Ledbetter Park                                 | 1 mile northwest of Cutler on Road 124/Hwy 63                            | 11    | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee.  |
| 9                  | Mooney Grove Park                              | 2 Miles south of Caldwell Avenue on Mooney Blvd. In South Visalia.       | 143   | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Paddle boats, playground, baseball diamonds. Home of the End Trail statue. One of the largest oak woodlands in Tulare County. Location of the Agriculture and Farm Labor Museum. |
| 10                 | Pixley Park                                    | 1 mile NE of Pixley on Road 124.   | 22    | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee.  |
| 11                 | Tulare County Museum                           | In Mooney Grove Park, South Visalia.                                     | 8.5   | Free admission with park fee. Museum is opened Thursday thru Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).   |
| 12                 | Woodville Park                                 | Located in Avenue 166 in Woodville.                                      | 10    | Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Day use no entrance fee.   |
| 13                 | West Main Street Park                          | 2 blocks west of County Courthouse on Main Street in Downtown Visalia.   | 5     | Day use no entrance fee.  |
| <b>State</b>       |  |  |       |   |
| 14                 | Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park        | 7 miles west of Earlimart on County Road J22.                            | na    | 15 campsites, open year round.  |
| 15                 | Mountain Home State Forest                     | Located in Sequoia National Forest                                       | na    | No reservations taken for campgrounds.  |
| <b>Federal</b>     |  |  |       |   |
| 16                 | Lake Kaweah                                    | 25 miles east of Visalia on Highway 198.                                 | 2,558 | Horse Creek Campground, boat ramps, picnic areas, swimming, and hiking.   |
| 17                 | Lake Success                                   | 10 miles SE of Porterville on Highway 198.                               | 2,450 | Tule Campground, boating, fishing, picnic areas, playgrounds, and softball field. Hunting is permitted in the Wildlife Management Area.   |
| 18                 | Sequoia National Forest                        | Southeastern portion of Tulare County.                                   | na    | Campgrounds include Gray's Meadow, Oak Creek, Onion Valley, Stony Creek, Sunset, and Whitney Portal with over 300 campsites.  |
| 19                 | Giant Sequoia National Monument                | Covers areas north and south of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. | na    |   |
| 20                 | Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) | Northeastern portion of Tulare County.                                   | na    | Campgrounds include Atwell Mill Campground, Buckeye Flat, Cold Springs, Crystal Springs, Dorst Campground, Lodgepole, Moraine, Potwisha, Sheep Creek, and South Fork with over 800 campsites.                             |
| <b>Total Acres</b> |  |  |       | <b>5,701</b>  |

Source: Tulare County Resource Management Agency, Parks and Recreation Branch, 2008; Automobile Club of Southern California, Tulare County Map.

### ***State Parks and Forests***

#### ***Colonel Allensworth State Park***

“The only State Park in Tulare County is Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park discussed in Section 9.3. The park contains a museum and a visitor center addressing the town’s history, as well as camping facilities. Allensworth is the only California town to be founded, financed and governed by African Americans. The small farming community was founded in 1908 by Colonel Allen Allensworth and a group of others dedicated to improving the economic and social status of African Americans. Uncontrollable circumstances, including a drop in the area’s water table, resulted in the town’s demise. With continuing restoration and special events, the town is coming

back to life as a state historic park. The park's visitor center features a film about the site. A yearly rededication ceremony reaffirms the vision of its pioneers."<sup>9</sup>

### Mountain Home State Forest

"The Mountain Home State Forest is a State Forest managed by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The Forest consists of 4,807 acres of parkland containing a number of Giant Sequoias, and is located just east of Porterville. The Forest is a Demonstration Forest, which is considered timberland that is managed for forestry education, research, and recreation. Fishing ponds, hiking trails, and campsites are some of the amenities that can be found in the Forest."<sup>10</sup>

### ***Other Recreational Facilities***

Other recreational resources available in Tulare County include portions of the Pacific Crest Trail, South Sierra Wilderness Area, Dome Land Wilderness Area, Golden Trout Wilderness Area, International Agri-Center, and the Tulare County Fairgrounds.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, there are several nature preserves open to the public which are owned and operated by non-profit organizations, including the Kaweah Oaks Preserve and Dry Creek-Homer Ranch preserves, both owned and operated by Sequoia Riverlands Trust.

Incorporated cities in the County also have a number of recreational facilities including neighborhood parks, play lots, pocket parks and other recreation facilities."<sup>12</sup> The City of Tulare has several small parks and recreational areas with the nearest to the Project site being Blain Park which is located approximately 4 miles west of the Project site.<sup>13</sup>

## **REGULATORY SETTING**

The following environmental regulatory settings were summarized, in part, from information contained in the *Tulare County General Plan 2010 Background Report*.

### ***Federal Agencies & Regulations***

#### United States National Park Service (NPS)

"The National Park Service (NPS) is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The NPS manages the 397 units of the National Park System. The NPS also helps administer dozens of affiliated sites, the National Register of Historic Places, National Heritage Areas, National Wild

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<sup>9</sup> Tulare County 2030 General Plan Re-circulated RDEIR, page 4-3

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., page 4-7

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., page 3.9-32

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., page 3.9-29

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., page 3.9-29

and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Landmarks, and National Trails.”<sup>14</sup>

### ***State Agencies & Regulations***

#### **California Department of Parks and Recreation**

“California Department of Parks and Recreation manages more than 270 park units, which contain the finest and most diverse collection of natural, cultural, and recreational resources to be found within California. These treasures are as diverse as California: From the last stands of primeval redwood forests to vast expanses of fragile desert; from the lofty Sierra Nevada to the broad sandy beaches of our southern coast; and from the opulence of Hearst Castle to the vestiges of colonial Russia. California State Parks contains the largest and most diverse natural and cultural heritage holdings of any state agency in the nation. State park units include underwater preserves, reserves, and parks; redwood, rhododendron, and wildlife reserves; state beaches, recreation areas, wilderness areas, and reservoirs; state historic parks, historic homes, Spanish era adobe buildings, including museums, visitor centers, cultural reserves, and preserves; as well as lighthouses, ghost towns, waterslides, conference centers, and off-highway vehicle parks. These parks protect and preserve an unparalleled collection of culturally and environmentally sensitive structures and habitats, threatened plant and animal species, ancient Native American sites, historic structures and artifacts . . . the best of California's natural and cultural history.”<sup>15</sup>

### ***Local Policy & Regulations***

#### **ERM-5.2 Park Amenities**

The County shall provide a broad range of active and passive recreational opportunities within community parks. When possible, this should include active sports fields and facilities, community center/recreation buildings, children’s play areas, multi-use areas and trails, sitting areas, and other specialized uses as appropriate.

#### **ERM-5.3 Park Dedication Requirements**

The County shall require the dedication of land and/or payment of fees, in accordance with local authority and State law (for example the Quimby Act), to ensure funding for the acquisition and development of public recreation facilities.

#### **ERM-5.5 Collocated Facilities**

The County shall encourage the development of parks near public facilities such as schools, community halls, libraries, museums, prehistoric sites, and open space areas and shall encourage joint-use agreements whenever possible.

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<sup>14</sup> National Park Service Overview Brochure, Updated May, 2011

<sup>15</sup> California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=91](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=91)

## IMPACT EVALUATION

- a) **Would the project 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?**

Project Impact Analysis: *Less than Significant Impact*

Typically, the increased use of parks and recreational facilities result from the addition of new housing and the accompanying growth of persons. No new housing is proposed. Although the proposed Project will result in increase of 5 employees, the Project site is not located near a park or recreational facility. The Project is located approximately 0.13 miles northwest of Sundale Elementary School, which includes a school yard. The proposed Project will not impact the school yard.

Cumulative Impact Analysis: *Less than Significant Impact*

The geographic area of this cumulative analysis is Tulare County. This cumulative analysis is based on the information provided in the Tulare County 2030 General Plan, General Plan background Report, and/or Tulare County 2030 General Plan EIR.

The proposed Project does not include housing nor the accompanying growth of persons. The proposed Project will result in an increase of 5 employees, which will not significantly increase the use of parks or recreational facilities. As such less than significant cumulative impacts related to this checklist item will occur.

Mitigation Measures:

**None Required.**

Conclusion: *Less than Significant Impact*

As noted above, less than significant Project specific or cumulative impacts related to this checklist item will occur.

- b) **Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

Project Impact Analysis: *No Impact*

The proposed Project does not include new recreational facilities or the expansion of recreational facilities. As such, no Project specific impacts related to this checklist item will occur.

Cumulative Impact Analysis:     ***No Impact***

The geographic area of this cumulative analysis is Tulare County. This cumulative analysis is based on the information provided in the Tulare County 2030 General Plan, General Plan background Report, and/or Tulare County 2030 General Plan EIR.

As noted earlier, the proposed Project does not include new recreational facilities or the expansion of recreational facilities. As such, no cumulative impacts related to this checklist item will occur.

Mitigation Measures:

**None Required.**

Conclusion:                             ***No Impact***

As noted earlier, no Project specific or cumulative impacts related to this checklist item will occur.

**REFERENCES**

Tulare County 2030 General Plan, August 2012

Tulare County 2030 General Plan Background Report, February 2010

Tulare County 2030 General Plan, Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR),  
February 2010

2012 CEQA Guidelines

National Park Service Overview Brochure, Updated May, 2011

California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=91](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=91)