

11 SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information relevant to socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts under NEPA in connection with the Proposed Action and alternatives. This chapter includes: introduction, environmental and regulatory setting, impact analysis methods and assumptions, significance criteria, environmental effects of the action and alternatives, and mitigation measures to address effects that are identified as significant.

11.1.1 Data Sources

The following key sources of information and data were reviewed to prepare this chapter.

- ▲ federal census data on demographics, income, and employment in Yolo County (U.S. Census Bureau 2015); and
- ▲ the *Yolo County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2014 (Yolo County 2015).

11.1.2 Definitions

Social and economic effects of the alternatives are considered in this analysis if they are related to effects on the natural or physical environment. Environmental justice is defined below in Section 11.2.2, *Regulatory Setting, Environmental Justice*.

As defined by Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) *Guidance for Agencies on Key Terms in Executive Order 12898* (CEQ 1997), minority individuals are identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, black, or Hispanic. Minority populations are identified by two factors: 1) where the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage of the general population, and 2) where the minority population percentage of the affected area exceeds 50 percent.

Low income populations are identified on the basis of poverty thresholds provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and identified as one of the following: 1) the percentage of the population below the poverty level is meaningfully greater than the corresponding percentage in the general population, and/or 2) the percentage of the population below the poverty level in the affected area is 20 percent or more.

11.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

11.2.1 Environmental Setting

The Plan Area encompasses all of Yolo County, a generally rural area in which the Yolo County General Plan designates approximately 603,544 acres of land in Yolo County for agricultural use (Yolo County 2009), which is approximately 92 percent of the Plan Area. As of January 2015, 87 percent of the county's population of 209,393 residents resided in the four incorporated cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters,

and Sacramento (DOF 2015). Each of the incorporated cities is demographically and economically distinct, and there is diversity within and between these communities. Davis is defined in large part by the presence of the University of California (UC) campus, but is also a residential community internationally known for its commitment to environmental awareness and progressive social programs. Woodland is the county seat and has a strong historic heritage. West Sacramento is home to the Port of Sacramento, which is the export point for over one million tons annually of some of Yolo County's many agricultural products, such as rice, wheat, and corn, as well as industrial products, such as lumber, wood chips, and cement. Winters is a small town in the eastern part of the county with a growing locally- and regionally-sourced food economy. The unincorporated area of Yolo County has exceptionally productive soils, an excellent growing climate, and adequate water supply to support its large and diverse agricultural industry (Yolo County 2015).

The populations of Yolo County and the incorporated cities are shown in Table 11-1. The rate of population growth in Yolo County between 2010 and 2014 (3.4 percent) was similar to the statewide rate of growth (4.2 percent). Within the county, the population of the city of West Sacramento grew 6.4 percent, which is above the county average, while the city of Davis grew 1.7 percent, notably less than the county as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau 2015).

Table 11-1 Yolo County Population, 2010 and 2014

Area/Jurisdiction	2010	2014	Percent Change
Incorporated Cities			
Davis	65,611	66,742	1.7%
West Sacramento	48,744	51,847	6.4%
Winters	6,624	6,941	4.8%
Woodland	55,468	57,432	3.5%
Unincorporated County	24,391	26,259	7.7%
County Total	200,838	209,221	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 11-2 shows comparative racial characteristics for the county and Table 11-3 provides additional demographic data. The majority of residents self-identify as white. With the exception of a notable Asian population in the cities of Davis and West Sacramento, there are no racial groups (or individuals who identify with two or more racial groups) that make up a substantial (10 percent or more) proportion of the Plan Area. Additionally, roughly 30 percent of the population of Yolo County identifies as being of Hispanic or Latino origin (the federal government considers race and Hispanic or Latino origin to be separate, distinct concepts [U.S. Census Bureau 2001]). This population is particularly represented in the cities of Winters and Woodland (U.S. Census Bureau 2015).

When compared to the state as a whole, fewer families in Yolo County and the incorporated cities speak a language other than English at home (Table 11-3), and the percentage of the population that has achieved at least a high school education is roughly equivalent to the statewide average. The average number of people per household (i.e., occupied housing unit) is similar to, but slightly less than, the statewide average.

Table 11-2 Race and Origin of Yolo County's Population, 2010

Area/Jurisdiction	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino
Incorporated Cities							
Davis	64.9%	2.3%	0.5%	21.9%	0.2%	5.4%	12.5%
West Sacramento	60.6%	4.8%	1.6%	10.5%	1.1%	7.7%	31.4%
Winters	70.0%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	0.1%	5.0%	52.4%
Woodland	62.9%	1.5%	1.3%	6.2%	0.3%	5.2%	47.4%
County Total	63.2%	2.6%	1.1%	13.0%	0.5%	5.8%	30.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015

Table 11-3 General Demographic Characteristics of Yolo County and Incorporated Cities, 2010-2014

Characteristic	California	Yolo County*	Davis	UC Davis (CDP)	West Sacramento	Winters	Woodland
Households, 2010-2014	12,617,280	70,953	24,306	912**	17,571	2,479	19,348
Average household size (persons), 2010-2014	2.95	2.76	2.63	2.55**	2.82	2.76	2.85
Language other than English spoken at home (% of persons over 5) 2010-2014	43.8%	35%	27.6%	47.3%	36.4%	34.1%	40.4%
High school graduate or higher (% of persons over 25) 2010-2014	81.5%	85%	95.8%	98.5%	81.9%	82.3%	78.7%

CDP= Census-designated place

* data includes cities, CDP's, and unincorporated portions of Yolo County

** on-campus only

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

As summarized in Table 11-4, the median household incomes reported throughout the county are similar to, although less than, the statewide average of \$61,489, and range from \$53,307 for the City of West Sacramento to \$57,454 for the City of Davis. The portion of the population reported by the U.S. Census Bureau as in poverty varies widely, from 4.7 percent in the City of Winters to 27.1 percent in the city of Davis.

Table 11-4 Economic Data for Yolo County and Incorporated Cities

	California	Yolo County*	Davis	West Sacramento	Winters	Woodland
Median household income (in 2014 dollars), 2010-2014	\$61,489	\$55,918	\$57,454	\$53,307	\$59,856	\$54,532
Individuals below poverty level (percent)	16.4%	19.5%	27.1%	20.8%	4.7%	14.6%

* data includes cities and unincorporated portions of Yolo County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015

As of July 2015, the unemployment rate in Yolo County was 6.3 percent (California Employment Development Department [EDD] 2015a). Table 11-5 presents the county's annual average employment data for several industry sectors for the ten-year period between 2005 and 2014. While the county's economy is based primarily on agriculture, the government sector is the largest employer in the county, followed by retail, then the transportation, warehousing, and utilities category. Industries with notable gains in employment include farm, retail, and education and health services. Declines have occurred for the construction and financial industries. In 2014, approximately six percent of the labor force was employed in farm-related jobs (EDD 2015b).

Table 11-5 Yolo County Annual Average Industry Employment (2005 - 2014)*

Industry Sector	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Farm	3,800	4,100	4,300	4,700	4,900	4,900	5,100	5,300	5,400	5,900
Mining and Logging	200	300	300	300	100	200	200	100	200	200
Construction	5,300	5,300	5,500	4,800	4,000	3,500	3,300	3,100	3,000	2,900
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3,500	3,600	3,300	3,000	2,400	2,500	2,400	2,600	3,000	3,600
Nondurable Goods Manufacturing	3,100	3,000	2,700	2,800	2,800	2,700	2,300	2,400	2,500	2,400
Wholesale Trade	4,900	5,200	5,300	5,300	4,600	4,200	4,300	4,300	4,600	4,500
Retail Trade	6,900	7,200	7,700	8,000	7,700	7,700	7,800	7,600	7,800	8,200
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	7,700	7,700	8,000	7,900	6,900	6,400	6,400	6,300	6,400	6,600
Information	1,100	1,100	1,200	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,100	1,000
Financial Activities	3,700	3,900	4,300	3,500	3,500	3,100	2,900	2,900	2,800	2,500
Professional and Business Services	8,000	7,800	8,100	7,700	7,100	6,900	7,200	7,700	7,800	7,800
Educational and Health Services	7,200	7,200	7,700	7,900	8,100	8,100	8,000	8,300	8,900	9,200
Leisure and Hospitality	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,700	6,700	6,400	6,300	6,700	6,800	7,200
Other Services	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,100	2,000	1,900	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,400
Government	36,400	35,500	36,200	36,700	36,800	36,200	36,000	36,100	36,500	37,300

* data includes cities, CDP's, and unincorporated portions of Yolo County

CDP= Census-designated place

Source: California Employment Development Department 2015b

PROPERTY TAX REVENUES

Agricultural property and businesses provide a significant portion of the tax base in Yolo County. Yolo County has led the State in agricultural preservation for the last several decades, primarily by directing growth into the incorporated cities. This effort has succeeded in preserving prime agricultural land, but has led to reduced potential for property tax revenues for the county. Property tax revenues generated by agriculture are generally lower than would be generated by other uses on the same land. Property tax revenues may be further limited by Williamson Act contracts (Yolo County 2014: iv) (see Chapter 6, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*, in this EIS/EIR for a description of the Williamson Act). The county's share of property tax is the second lowest in the State (Yolo County 2014: iv). Yolo County property tax revenues for the 2013 fiscal year totaled \$40,937,000 (Yolo County 2014: 11). In 2013, there were 312,984 acres of land under Williamson Act contracts in Yolo County (California Department of Conservation 2015). This constitutes approximately 49 percent of the county's total acreage, most of which is located within unincorporated Yolo County.

Property tax revenue for each of Yolo's incorporated cities varies. Property tax revenues for the 2013-2014 fiscal year totaled \$11,926,326 for the City of Davis (Davis 2014: 14), \$18,038,515 for the City of West Sacramento (West Sacramento 2014: 11), \$1,232,688 for the City of Winters (Winters 2014:9), and property tax revenues for the 2012-2013 fiscal year totaled \$8,837,000 for the City of Woodland (Woodland 2014: 8).

11.2.2 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Socioeconomics

NEPA requires that an EIS consider social and economic effects if they are related to effects on the natural or physical environment, and the NEPA definition of effects includes social and economic factors (40 CFR1508.8, 1508.14).

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (EPA 2010). Fair treatment means that “no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, shall bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies” (EPA 2011).

Environmental justice is rooted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in federally assisted programs, and in Executive Order 12898 (*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), issued February 11, 1994. Executive Order 12898 was intended to ensure that federal actions and policies do not result in disproportionately high adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. It requires each federal agency to take “appropriate and necessary” steps to identify and address any such disproportionate effects resulting from its programs, policies, or activities, including those it implements directly, and those for which it provides permitting or funding. Additional guidance from the President's Council on Environmental Quality (1997) clarifies that environmental justice concerns may arise from effects on the natural or physical environment that produce human health or ecological outcomes, or from adverse social or economic changes.

In 2011, the EPA released an updated strategy, Plan EJ 2014, as a roadmap to help EPA integrate environmental justice into its programs, policies, and activities. The plan is intended to advance environmental justice through: protecting the environment and health in overburdened communities;¹ empowering communities to take action to improve their health and environment; and establishing partnerships with local, state, tribal, and federal governments and organizations to achieve healthy and sustainable communities. Goals of the plan include minimization and mitigation of disproportionate, negative impacts while fostering environmental, public health, and economic benefits for overburdened communities through the use of interagency legal tools, such as NEPA.

Environmental justice issues are mandated and regulated at the federal level, and compliance with NEPA requires analysis of environmental justice effects.

¹ In Plan EJ 2014, EPA uses the term “overburdened” to describe the minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations or communities in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. This increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of both negative and lack of positive environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or communities.

STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Socioeconomics

CEQA requires analysis of a proposed project's potential impacts on population growth and housing supply, but social and economic changes are not considered environmental impacts in and of themselves under CEQA, unless they contribute to a significant adverse physical change in the environment. CEQA also permits discussion of social and economic changes that would result from a change in the physical environment and could in turn lead to additional (secondary or indirect) effects in the physical environment (CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15064[f]).

Environmental Justice

California does not require environmental justice analysis in documents prepared for CEQA compliance.

LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Yolo County General Plan

The Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan includes land use policies developed to ensure fair treatment and equitable decision-making. These include the following policies related to socioeconomics and environmental justice issues and are potentially relevant to the Plan:

- ▲ **Policy LU-5.1.** Balance land use decisions and land use burdens countywide so that there is not a disproportionate impact to any one group of residents because of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, socio-economic status, or other arbitrary factor.
- ▲ **Policy LU-5.3.** Employ strategies to overcome linguistic, institutional, cultural, economic and historic barriers to effective public participation in the planning process.
- ▲ **Policy LU-5.5.** Ensure that public facilities, services and amenities are distributed equitably and in locations that enhance the quality of life for the broadest number of county residents.

City of Davis General Plan

Chapter 13, *Diversity*, of the Davis General Plan includes goals and policies related to attainment of equal opportunity in all aspects of public life, including employment, entrepreneurship, financing, and housing. However, these goals and policies are not directly relevant to the Plan as it focuses on equal access to City programs and support and assistance of disabled population.

City of West Sacramento General Plan

The City of West Sacramento General Plan contains the following goal and policies that relate to economic development that may be applicable to the analysis of the HCP/NCCP:

Goal ED-1. Maintain and expand a strong, diverse, and sustainable local economy that provides abundant employment opportunities, a high quality of life, and a sound tax base.

- ▲ **Policy ED-1.3. Global Food Industry Hub.** The City shall continue to recruit and retain regional, national, and international businesses in food and agricultural-related industries, including food production, distribution, equipment manufacturing, education, research and development to grow West Sacramento's image as a global food industry hub.
- ▲ **Policy ED-1.4. Targeted Industry Clusters.** In addition to food, agriculture and green technology, the City shall promote the development of other targeted industry clusters including advanced manufacturing, health care technology, biotechnology through strategic partnerships with higher education institutions, work force training agencies, business associations, financial institutions, and venture capitalist concerns.

City of Winters General Plan

The City of Winters General Plan does not include goals or policies directly applicable to the issues of socioeconomics and environmental justice that are relevant to the Plan.

City of Woodland General Plan

The City of Woodland General Plan contains the following goals and policies that relate to economic development and environmental justice that may be applicable to the analysis of the HCP/NCCP:

Goal 6.A: Health Equity. Promote health equity in Woodland, including the promotion of equal access to health facilities, goods, services, and economic and educational opportunities; helping to ensure overall well-being for residents of all ages, abilities, and incomes; and fairly treating all members of the public in the process of creating a healthy Woodland.

- ▲ **Policy 6.A.6:** Environmental Justice. Treat all segments of the Woodland community fairly in the process of creating a healthy environment and strive to equally share the benefits and the burdens associated with public services, facilities, amenities, and decisions across all members of the community.
- ▲ **Policy 6.A.8:** Equity of Environmental Protections. Apply and enforce environmental protection measures equally among the geographic and socioeconomic sectors of Woodland.

Goal 4.C: Strategic Land Uses and Development. Recognize the important roles that land uses and development play in the City's economic success and fiscal health. Consider economic benefits and costs and long-term community needs in land use decisions, and reserve sites for designated uses.

- ▲ **Policy 4.C.9:** Importance of Agricultural Industry. Recognize the importance of agriculture-related business and industries to the City and region, and support the continuation and development of agriculture and agriculture-related enterprises in and around Woodland by:
 - Accommodating agriculture-related industries in Industrial and Business Park districts;
 - Promoting locally-grown and produced agricultural goods and value-added foods and beverages, and the image of Woodland and Yolo County as an agricultural region; and coordinating with the County on agriculture-supporting policies and programs, including ag-technology accelerators, agricultural processing facilities, and flood control and water management.

Goal 2.D: Economic Development. Promote economic growth and vitality by bolstering key industries and encouraging balanced job growth.

- ▲ **Policy 2.D.2:** Food and Agriculture Industry Cluster. Develop Woodland into a premier food and agriculture industry cluster by providing appropriate infrastructure, adequate land with compatible land uses, and by supporting research and innovation.

11.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

11.3.1 Methodology and Significance Criteria

METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

As described in Section 3.3, the issuance of ITPs by the Wildlife Agencies for take of 12 covered species associated with five categories of covered activities—together with subsequent adoption and implementation of the Plan by the Applicants consistent with the Permits—is the Proposed Action considered in this EIS/EIR. Issuance of permits by the Wildlife Agencies only provides compliance with the FESA and NCCPA.

All covered activities are subject to the approval authority of one or more of the Applicants with jurisdiction over such projects, and HCP/NCCP approval and permit issuance for take of covered species does not confer or imply approval from any entity other than the USFWS or CDFW to implement the covered activities. Rather, as part of the standard approval process, individual projects will be considered for further environmental analysis and generally will receive separate, project-level environmental analysis review under CEQA and, in some cases, NEPA for those projects involving federal Agencies.

The assessment of potential effects on socioeconomics and environmental justice in the Plan Area is based on the anticipated changes in land cover and land uses over a 50-year study period, corresponding to the permit term under the Proposed Action Alternative.

Anticipated changes in land cover/land use for each alternative are described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. See Chapter 3, *Approach to the Analysis*, for a description of the methodology used across all resource chapters for the analysis of cumulative effects.

Socioeconomics

The effects of the action alternatives on socioeconomics are evaluated qualitatively. Generally, socioeconomic effects could occur if the alternatives result in a substantial change in wages earned in the current employment sectors through the displacement of nonagricultural or agricultural businesses or in a substantial reduction in property tax revenue. Such a reduction could occur if land currently used for nonagricultural and agricultural businesses is converted into public uses that do not contribute to property taxes as a result of habitat restoration activities. Accordingly, the analysis qualitatively addresses the potential conversion of agricultural lands to nonagricultural uses that do not generate tax revenue and estimates the degree to which implementing each alternative would reduce agricultural uses—affecting the agricultural economy of the region—or affect property tax revenues through acquisition of land for reserves. Since socioeconomics analysis is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made in the analysis.

Environmental Justice

This subsection describes how disproportionately high and adverse effects on environmental justice populations were identified. This methodology follows the general guidance provided by EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, CEQ's Environmental Justice: Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act (CEQ 1997), and EPA's Toolkit for Assessing Potential Allegations of Environmental Injustice (EPA 2004).

The following definitions were used to identify relevant populations and guide analysis of environmental justice issues. These definitions come from the CEQ guidance and EPA Toolkit for Assessing Potential Allegations of Environmental Injustice.

- ▲ Minorities: individuals who are members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black (not of Hispanic origin); or Hispanic (Council on Environmental Quality 1997). Hispanic or Latino refers to a place of origin whereas American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Black or African-American (as well as White or European-American) refer to racial categories; thus, for census purposes, individuals classify themselves into racial categories as well as place of origin categories, including Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino. The U.S. Census 2010 allowed individuals to choose more than one race. For this analysis, consistent with guidance from CEQ and EPA (EPA 2004), minority refers to people who are Hispanic/Latino of any race, as well as those who are non-Hispanic/Latino of a race other than White or European-American.
- ▲ Low-income: low-income populations are identified using the national poverty thresholds from the U.S. Census Bureau (CEQ 1997).
- ▲ Disproportionately high and adverse effects: effects that are adverse under NEPA and disproportionately affect a minority or low-income community as described below. Where minority or low-income individuals constitute a meaningfully greater population, a disproportionately high and adverse finding is made.

The EPA Toolkit for Assessing Potential Allegations of Environmental Injustice (EPA 2004) provides a general roadmap and methodology for the assessment of environmental justice effects. In accordance with this guidance, environmental justice effects are identified in a phased process with the following steps.

- ▲ Problem formulation: identify the scope of the action or program that may have environmental justice consequences and integrate the environmental justice assessment with parallel environmental review processes (EPA 2004). For this chapter, the scope of the problem subject to analysis consists of all the alternatives.
- ▲ Data collection: collect information about sources of environmental or health effects in environmental justice populations and identify minority and low-income groups as well as appropriate reference populations (EPA 2004). In Section 14.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, of this chapter, information about the distribution of environmental justice populations in the Plan Area is presented.
- ▲ Identification of adverse effects: identify significant environmental effects associated with the agency action or program that may affect environmental justice populations (EPA 2004). This environmental justice assessment is limited to effects that have been identified as adverse even after mitigation as described in Chapters 4 through 13 and Chapter 15 of this EIS/EIR that may affect environmental justice populations. These effects are included in this chapter and analyzed for their potential to result in disproportionate adverse effects on environmental justice populations. Effects determined not to be adverse in Chapters 4 through 13 and Chapter 15 are not considered in the analysis below because those effects would not result in disproportionate effects on minority and low-income populations. In addition, significant effects that would not result in direct or discernable indirect effects on environmental justice populations are not included in the analysis. These would include terrestrial and aquatic resources, as any significant environmental effects that may be disclosed in Chapter 6, *Biological Resources*, would not result in direct or discernable indirect effects on environmental justice populations. This approach is consistent with CEQ guidance (CEQ 1997).
- ▲ Identification of disproportionate effects: use the information gathered in the identification of adverse effects and determine if these environmental consequences may disproportionately affect an environmental justice population. Where effects are identified as adverse under NEPA, this analysis further identifies whether the adverse effects would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.

Since analysis of environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

As described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*, the Conservancy has proposed a number of changes to the HCP/NCCP since the release of the Draft on June 1, 2017. These changes are described and Characterized in Section 2.3.2, *Alternative B – Proposed Action Alternative (Permit Issuance/Plan Implementation)*, of Chapter 2.

These proposed changes fall into several categories;

- ▲ Copy edits such as correction of spelling errors,
- ▲ Minor text clarifications and corrections such as providing or correcting cross references to other parts of the document,
- ▲ Minor numeric corrections, such as small adjustments to acreages of particular land cover types,
- ▲ Providing updated information since publication of the Draft HCP/NCCP such as including information from the City of Woodland General Plan Update 2035, which was adopted after the Draft HCP/NCCP was published,

- ▲ Clarifications or enhancements to particular plan elements such as new or updated Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs),
- ▲ Increased details on plan implementation such as providing additional information on the content of the Implementation Handbook, and
- ▲ Changes in assumptions regarding costs and funding to reflect updated information.

These proposed changes have been analyzed to determine whether they would result in any changes to the impact analysis or conclusions reached in the Draft EIS/EIR. This analysis is provided in Section 24.2, *Evaluation of Proposed Modifications to the Draft HCP/NCCP*. The analysis substantiates that the proposed changes to the HCP/NCCP do not alter the analysis or impact conclusions provided in the Draft EIS/EIR for socioeconomics and environmental justice. Therefore, no changes to the analysis provided below are merited.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Socioeconomics

For the purposes of this analysis, a socioeconomic impact is considered to be adverse if it would result in any of the following.

- ▲ Substantially change economic activity within the Plan Area.
- ▲ Substantially affect property tax revenue.

Environmental Justice

Federal CEQ guidance provides relevant thresholds for identification of environmental justice effects. The CEQ guidance identifies three factors to be considered to the extent practicable when determining whether environmental effects are disproportionately high and adverse (CEQ 1997).

- ▲ Whether there is or would be an impact on the natural or physical environment that significantly and adversely affects a minority population, or low-income population. Such effects may include ecological, cultural, human health, economic, or social impacts on minority communities, low-income communities, or Indian tribes when those impacts are interrelated to impacts on the natural or physical environment. For the purposes of this analysis a significant and adverse effect on a minority population is found where significant environmental effects would occur in a location where minority populations (as defined above) constitute greater than 50 percent of the population, or low-income individuals constitute 20 percent or more of the population.
- ▲ Whether the environmental effects are significant and are or may have an adverse impact on minority populations, or low-income populations, which appreciably exceeds or is likely to appreciably exceed those on the general population or other appropriate comparison group. For the purposes of this analysis an effect appreciably exceeds the effect on the general population if it would occur in a location where minorities constitute greater than 50 percent of the population or low-income individuals constitute 20 percent or more of the population.
- ▲ Whether the environmental effects occur or would occur in a minority population or low-income population affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposures from environmental hazards that appreciably exceed the cumulative or adverse exposure of the population at large. For the purposes of this analysis an effect appreciably exceeds the effect on the general population if the affected population is greater than 50 percent minority or 20 percent or greater low-income.

These standards are consistent with the standards of the California Resources Agency Environmental Justice Policy. This policy states that the Resources Agency and the constituent departments shall (California Resources Agency 2012) undertake the following.

- ▲ Identify relevant populations that might be adversely affected by programs or projects submitted by outside parties, as appropriate.
- ▲ Work in conjunction with other federal, state, regional, and local agencies to ensure consideration of disproportionate impacts on relevant populations

The factors and standards described above have been summarized into the following significance criteria; for the purposes of this analysis, an impact is considered to be adverse if it would result in any of the following:

- ▲ Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

11.3.2 Effects of Proposed Action and Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE A—NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO PERMIT/NO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

As described previously in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*, under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), take associated with development would occur over the 50-year study period consistent with the local general plans and other applicable planning documents (e.g., community plans, specific plans, recreation plans). As also described in Chapter 2, for purposes of this analysis, development and related activities (e.g., operations and maintenance) under the No Action Alternative are considered using the same organizational categories identified in the Yolo HCP/NCCP; urban projects and activities; rural projects and activities, which includes rural public services, infrastructure, and utilities, agricultural economic development, and open space; and public and private operations and maintenance. Under the No Action Alternative, the Plan would not be approved and implemented and no Endangered Species Act authorizations would be issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or CDFW related to the Plan. Endangered species permitting and mitigation would continue on an individual project-by-project basis.

Urban projects and activities would be concentrated within the cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland. Rural projects and activities would primarily occur within and around the existing communities within the unincorporated county (primarily Elkhorn, Madison, Clarksburg, Dunnigan, Esparto, and Knights Landing). Activities associated with the rural public services, infrastructure, and utilities, and agricultural economic development and open space categories would occur in various locations in the unincorporated county. Public and private operations and maintenance activities would occur both in the incorporated cities and the unincorporated county.

Developments in rural and urban areas within the Plan Area would continue to occur under the No Action Alternative, and would result in population growth either directly (i.e. new homes and businesses) or indirectly (i.e. road and infrastructure extensions), potentially resulting in the need for expanded and additional homes and community services. Land use activities associated with the general plans would anticipate and accommodate the population growth. The development of new or expanded communities and services would be expected to continue, in part, in response to increased demand as a result of population growth, consistent with current local plans and policies. Environmental impacts associated with the construction of new development would be addressed on a project-by-project basis. With projected population growth within the Plan Area, implementation of the general plans would result in an overall increase in housing and employment. This increase would have a beneficial effect on the local economy resulting from new employment and industry within the jurisdictions of the Plan Area. Developments in rural areas and some urban areas would result in the removal of agricultural lands within individual project sites, which would result in the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses (see Chapter 6,

Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Tables 6-8 and 6-9 in this document). This could result in the loss of some jobs within the farm industry. Displacement and overall reduction of farms and agricultural land are expected as urban land uses expand into existing agricultural areas (see Chapter 6, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*). Farms typically generate lower levels of property taxes-and taxes in general-than do urban uses. Covered activities associated with general plan implementation could entail rezoning parcels, introducing new or substantially different uses, and altering or expanding support infrastructure (e.g., water service, transportation facilities) in support of planned development. With anticipated increases in housing and employment as a result of projected population growth, the associated increase in urban property uses, the number of businesses, and the expansion of existing businesses are expected to positively contribute to the local tax base through the generation of property tax revenue. Since the County is able to collect more property taxes from urban uses (e.g., residential homes) than from other uses (e.g., agricultural uses) property taxes are expected to increase as urban uses increase.

Activities under the rural public services, infrastructure, and utilities category include improvements, replacements, and construction of new public services, infrastructure, and utilities outside of the incorporated cities and rural communities, such as roads, wet and dry utility infrastructure, landfills and related facilities, levees, airports, and ports. Development under this category would generate new jobs through the expansion of utilities and municipal services to new areas, and the anticipated development is intended to provide increased community services, infrastructure, and utilities that serve planned land uses that are consistent with local general plans.

Activities under the agricultural economic development and open space category could result in relatively large facilities being constructed in a rural/agricultural area (e.g., processing plants). These projects would create new employment opportunities in the Plan Area, would generally support the agricultural economy, and would be expected to result in little or no conversion of agricultural land that could result in loss of existing agricultural jobs.

Under the public and private operations and maintenance development category, various operations and maintenance activities would be implemented as part of existing and planned land uses, facilities, and services in both urban and rural areas. Activities would include management, operations, rehabilitation, replacement, repair, and maintenance of facilities ranging from utilities, roadways, bridges, and industrial land uses to parks and open space. Most of these activities would be undertaken with existing personnel and would not generate large numbers of new jobs. These activities generally would not result in permanent conversion of agricultural lands to other uses; therefore, loss of agricultural jobs is not anticipated as a result.

As indicated in Table 11-2, minority individuals constitute a meaningfully larger percentage of the population (more than 50 percent) within the City of Winters (i.e. In 2010, Hispanic or Latino population made up 52.4 percent of city of Winters population) than in the general population. As shown in Table 11-4, low-income individuals constitute a meaningfully larger percentage of the population (more than 20 percent) within Davis and West Sacramento than in the general population.

When creating general plans, the County and cities conduct public outreach and engagement programs to involve the residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the development of the vision, goals, and policies. While CEQA doesn't require Lead Agencies to review whether a project would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minorities and low-income populations, there are requirements that each jurisdiction accommodate low-income residents as part of housing element policies. In addition, the general plans contain other policies which aim to provide for the needs of all residents, including minorities and low-income persons. The City of Davis General Plan has a diversity chapter, in which they provide goals, policies, and actions aimed at equal opportunities for all residents and to reflect the ethnic diversity of the City in the makeup of City staff and leadership.

There is no evidence that the development and other activities described in the general plans and expected to be implemented in the 50-year study period would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minorities and low-income persons.

As the development and other activities described above are implemented under the No Action Alternative, impacts to threatened and endangered species and other biological resources would occur, requiring mitigation. Mitigation measures are likely to include on-site areas of preservation within a specific project site, and smaller, non-contiguous areas of preservation lands throughout Yolo County, or nearby sites outside the county with authorization from the permitting agencies. Generally, these required mitigation actions under the No Action Alternative would either retain lands in their existing condition (i.e., preserve habitat), or convert lands to a more natural state (i.e., habitat restoration or creation). Retaining land in its existing condition would not substantially change economic activity and property tax revenue or disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations. However, if habitat restoration activities convert agricultural land to publicly owned habitat preserves, this could result in a reduction in property tax revenue for the local jurisdictions.

Cumulative Effects

It is anticipated that implementation of the general plans would result in an overall increase in economic activities within the Plan Area as a result of urban development and would not substantially reduce expected agricultural production in the Plan Area, given the projections presented in Tables 6-8 and 6-9 of this document (see Chapter 6, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*). Accordingly, the No Action Alternative would not result in an incremental contribution to cumulative socioeconomic effects.

Implementation of the general plans, which must consider various economic and environmental factors, is unlikely to result in overall disproportionate effects on environmental justice populations.

ALTERNATIVE B—PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE (PERMIT ISSUANCE/PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B) incorporates the same development-related activities identified for the No Action Alternative (urban projects and activities, rural projects and activities, and public and private operations and maintenance), with the HCP/NCCP providing a mechanism for the Wildlife Agencies to provide incidental take authorization for these lawfully undertaken covered activities. Socioeconomic and environmental justice impacts as a result of these activities would be the same as those described under the No Action Alternative.

Where the Proposed Action Alternative differs from the No Action Alternative is in the implementation of the Yolo HCP/NCCP, including its conservation strategy and neighboring landowner protection program. The Proposed Action Alternative would target habitat restoration areas for covered species in Yolo County as a result of increased development activity. Components of the conservation strategy include but are not limited to habitat assessment surveys and population surveys; habitat management; restoration, enhancement, and creation of habitats; conversion of agricultural lands to create habitat; construction of facilities necessary for management and maintenance; monitoring; and control of invasive nonnative species.

Effect SOC-1: Substantially change economic activity within the Plan Area.

Implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative would involve natural resources conservation through the preservation of natural and seminatural landscapes and maintenance of ecological integrity of large habitat blocks. These activities would result in continuation of existing agricultural operations or the preservation of existing open space. The conservation strategy included in the Proposed Action Alternative also provides for habitat enhancement, where existing habitat conditions and values to covered species would be improved in an area, and habitat restoration and creation where an existing natural or seminatural land cover type would be converted to a different natural land cover type (e.g., restoration of riparian habitat on land that once supported riparian habitat, but currently contains annual grassland vegetation).

Issuance of take permits to local authorities would streamline the permit process and clearly define project mitigation requirements for future projects. The streamlined process may allow for quicker completion of projects and greater efficiency in land development, which could affect overall economic activity in the Plan

Area. Also, implementation of the conservation strategy would result in the creation of a small number of employment opportunities to establish, manage, and monitor reserves and implement habitat enhancement, restoration, and creation efforts. As indicated in the HCP/NCCP in Chapter 8, *Costs and Funding*, much of this work is expected to be implemented by contractors, local partners, and others. The Conservancy will not hire large numbers of permanent staff to implement the HCP/NCCP. Work efforts and any increased employment demand would be accommodated by existing employees and businesses within the county and the region.

The conservation strategy would result in the conversion of 702 acres of cultivated agricultural lands and up to 210 acres of grazing land to create habitat. However, the conservation strategy would also acquire 14,362 acres of cultivated lands (non-rice), 2,800 acres of cultivated lands (rice), and at least 4,430 acres of grassland natural community (potentially suitable for grazing) for inclusion in the reserve system.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **beneficial**. Although the Proposed Action Alternative would result in conversion of agricultural lands to habitat preserve, the Yolo HCP/NCCP would result in protection of substantial acreage of agricultural lands protected in perpetuity through the reserve system, resulting in a beneficial effect on the Plan Area's agricultural economy. Potential effects from establishment and management of a reserve system, and associated permitting streamlining under the Proposed Action Alternative would result in a beneficial change in economic activity within the Plan Area.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

No mitigation is required.

Effect EJ-1: Substantially affect property tax revenue.

As discussed above, implementation of the conservation strategy would result in the conversion of up to 702 acres of cultivated lands and 210 acres of grazing land to create habitat and acquisition of up to 21,592 acres of agricultural lands for inclusion in the reserve system. Land acquisition for the conservation strategy could indirectly affect tax revenue by removing 702 acres of cultivated lands and 210 acres of grazing land from production and therefore reducing taxable economic activity. Converting agricultural land to habitat could also reduce County property tax rolls if these habitat reserves pay no, or reduced, property taxes. There are also various mechanisms by which lands that are put under conservation easement, including agricultural lands put under an agricultural conservation easement, could pay reduced property taxes. When a landowner sells a conservation easement, they often receive a reduced assessed value to reflect the transfer of rights associated with the easement. However, a non-profit entity that purchases the easement may have less of a tax obligation on the value of the easement than the original land owner. In this scenario, less total property taxes may be paid on the easement acreage than if an easement had not been sold. In addition, in California, the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act offers incentives to preserve wildlife and plant habitat, agricultural lands, open spaces, and water rights on private lands. Landowners, including pass-through entities who donate land, an easement, or water rights are eligible for the credit. Landowners are allowed an income tax credit of 55% of the fair market value of the donated property against their income, with an eight-year carry-forward period (CWCB 2016). Therefore, donation of land or an easement could reduce income taxes collected.

The Proposed Action Alternative specifies the amount of fee-title versus easement acquisition for establishing the reserve system (i.e. 1,091 acres in fee title, or less than 3% of total acreage proposed) but has not yet identified specific parcels for acquisition; therefore, a detailed determination of impact on property tax revenue is not feasible. However, the conservation strategy would use conservation easements wherever feasible, thereby keeping the land in production, maintaining economic activity, and reducing the effects on tax revenue.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **less than significant**. In general, property tax revenues generated by agricultural and conservation lands are generally lower than would be generated by other uses on the same land. Accordingly, the potential loss in tax revenue (property taxes and taxes generated by economic activity) associated with conversion of up to 702 acres of cultivated land and 210 acres of potential grazing lands to habitat reserves and placement of land under conservation easements through implementation of the conservation strategy would be offset by higher tax revenue associated with planned urban development actions that are covered activities under the Proposed Action Alternative. The general balance between extent and type of development and level of conservation, relative to generation of tax revenue, are very similar between the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made. However, because of the interest in potential effects of the HCP/NCCP on economic conditions, the following information is provided. Relative to existing conditions, implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative would reduce tax revenue generated by lands placed into the reserve system, but tax revenue would increase from planned urban development actions receiving incidental take authorization from the Plan. Because urban development typically generates greater tax revenue than agricultural lands, future tax revenue for the County would be greater overall than existing tax revenue.

No mitigation is required.

Effect EJ-2: Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

The potential to have a substantially disproportionate effect on minority or low-income populations under the Proposed Action Alternative would be the same as described above for the various development categories under the No Action Alternative.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **less than significant**. Implementation of the conservation strategy and conservation measures was determined to have less-than-significant effects (after mitigation) on all resource categories, except for the conversion of agricultural land to a non-agricultural use under the CEQA Level of Significance (see Effect AG-1 in Chapter 6, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*). Potential effects from establishment and management of a reserve system under the Proposed Action Alternative, including Effect AG-1, would not result in significant adverse effects to minority or low-income populations. This effect is very similar between the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area resulting from past and present projects is described above for the No Action Alternative and remains the same for the Proposed Action Alternative.

With implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative, issuance of take permits to local authorities would streamline the permit process and clearly define project mitigation requirements for future projects, a small number of employment opportunities would be created, and substantial acreage of agricultural lands would be protected in perpetuity through the reserve system, resulting in a beneficial effect on the Plan Area's agricultural economy. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative would not result in a considerable adverse contribution to any combined effects of past, present, and probable future projects on socioeconomics. In terms of cumulative impacts, the Proposed Action Alternative would be the same as the No Action Alternative. Similar to the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action Alternative would not result in

disproportionate impacts to minority and low-income populations. Accordingly, the Proposed Action Alternative would not result in a contribution to a cumulative environmental justice impact.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

ALTERNATIVE C—REDUCED TAKE ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Reduced Take Alternative (Alternative C) would include the same categories of covered activities as the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B); however, under the Reduced Take Alternative, there are eight areas designated for development under the Proposed Action Alternative where activities that would result in take of covered species would not be permitted. See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, *Alternative C-Reduced Take Alternative* for more information on this alternative.

Impacts to economic activity within the Plan Area, property tax revenues, and environmental justice populations as a result of implementation of the Reduced Take Alternative would be similar to those discussed under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative. However, specific effects on economic activity within the Plan Area from not allowing activities that result in take in the eight designated areas would depend on various factors, including the type of development that may still occur at those eight locations. If these sites would have ultimately contained urban development or supported primarily job generating land uses, the restriction on take of these uses could either slow employment growth in the county, or divert demand for employment opportunities to another location. In either scenario, the Reduced Take Alternative could have a less positive effect on the county's economy activity as a whole.

Overall, not allowing new activities that result in take of covered species in the eight designated areas under this alternative (1,335 acres) would not, in and of itself, result in substantial changes in economic activity within the Plan Area (653,549 acres). Relative to socioeconomics and environmental justice populations, the effects of the conservation/mitigation actions among the alternatives would not substantially differ. Effects could be slightly less than under both the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made. *No mitigation is required.*

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area is the same as described for the Proposed Action Alternative. The individual effects on minority and low-income populations under the Reduced Take Alternative would be comparable to those described for the Proposed Action Alternative. Overall, implementation of the Reduced Take Alternative, like the Proposed Action Alternative, would not result in a considerable contribution to existing significant cumulative impacts on minority and low-income populations.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

ALTERNATIVE D—REDUCED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Reduced Development Alternative (Alternative D) would include the same categories of covered activities as the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B), but under the Reduced Development Alternative, development within a portion of the west side of the Dunnigan area, and the Elkhorn Specific Plan Area, would not be covered activities under the Yolo HCP/NCCP and therefore could not be provided incidental take authorization through the Plan. (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, *Alternative D-Reduced Development Alternative* for more information on this alternative). (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, *Alternative D-Reduced Development Alternative* for more information on this alternative). Because the two areas that would not be covered by the HCP/NCCP could be developed some time in the future, the overall development scenario may ultimately not differ from the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action Alternative. Relative to socioeconomic and environmental justice issues, the effects of the conservation/mitigation actions among the alternatives also would not appreciably differ.

Overall, effects related to socioeconomic and environmental justice issues as a result of implementation of the Reduced Development Alternative would not differ in any meaningful way from those described for the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action Alternative.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area is the same as described for the Proposed Action Alternative. The individual effects on minority and low-income populations under the Reduced Development Alternative would be comparable to those described for the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative. Overall, implementation of Reduced Development Alternative, like the No Action Alternative and Proposed Action Alternative, would not result in a considerable contribution to existing significant cumulative impacts on minority and low-income populations.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As stated above in the description of Methods and Assumptions, because the analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice impacts is not required by CEQA, only a NEPA determination is made.

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